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Ohio Northern University
College of Business Administration
Ada, Ohio, United States

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Background

The current assessment program of the College of Business Administration (CBA) dates back to the fall of 1995 when, driven by accreditation goals, a committee was created to manage the process. By 1997 the Assessment Committee developed an assessment plan that identified eight quantifiable learning goals for the business core and general education, and learning goals and objectives for each of the College’s three majors.

While developing its plan the CBA began to participate in the EBI Undergraduate Business Exit Study and administer the ETS Major Field Test to seniors. The Kelley and Meyer’s Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (Kelley, C. and J. Meyers. 1987/1989/1992. Minneapolis, MN: NCS Pearson Inc.; see Vangent - CCAI) also was administered during first-year orientation and to seniors. Enough information had been collected by 1998 to institute curriculum changes in CBA core curriculum (ethics, management, and organizational behavior), and in the management major curriculum.

In 1999, the College held focus groups in Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Lima, and Toledo. Each of the two-hour sessions were facilitated by an outside professional and followed a common interview protocol. Results from the study were combined with other data and used during CBA Faculty Fall Workshop to review performance to date and set quantifiable goals for future assessments.

The program goals and objectives were revised and extended to each major in 2002 at the suggestion of AACSB International’s peer review team. (See ONU Majors Learning Goals and Objectives.) The assessment plan also was refined to simplify measurement and facilitate faculty involvement. The faculty are currently in the process of developing learning goals and objectives for the Business and Marketing minors.

Description

Using tools such as the EBI Undergraduate Business Exit Study, ETS Major Field Tests, Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory, and executive focus groups, the current CBA program assesses the following eight competencies: (See ONU Learning Goals for a listing of measurable objectives for each goal.)

Assessment data is disseminated by the Assessment Committee (along with analysis and suggested recommendations) to the faculty multiple times a year. The Curriculum Committee then develops and presents to the faculty curricular proposals to address deficiencies. Curriculum changes are subject to faculty vote and administrative approval.
Using the Data

ONU provides an excellent example of “closing the loop” between assessment of student learning and the curriculum processes. The following examples illustrate how the CBA has used data from ETS Major Field Tests, Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventories, and EBI Undergraduate Student Exit Surveys.

Example 1. Several curriculum revisions were motivated by assessment outcomes using the ETS Major Field Test. First, below-median student quantitative skills in 1996 motivated regular coordination meetings between business and math faculty, resulting in more EXCEL assignments in general education courses and better integration of math concepts in business core business classes. For example, the required production course shifted from a traditional lecture format to an emphasis on problem solving. Student quantitative ETS scores increased to the 91st percentile by 2003 as a result of these changes.

Second, to increase ETS scores in accounting scores by non-accounting majors, access to introductory accounting courses was limited to second-year students. The idea was to improve carryover of accounting knowledge into the business core. Overall/average ETS scores on Accounting rose from 52.6 (1999) 76th percentile (2002) over a three-year period.

Third, cases and exercises were added to the core for management majors in 1998. As a result, the ETS management indicator rose to the 98th percentile 2001 for management majors. Finally, a team-taught integrative cross-functional case was added to the capstone course to reinforce all functional areas at the end of the curriculum.

Example 2. The CCAI, which generates indicators related to cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability, is administered during freshman orientation and during the senior year. Although ETS scores on the ‘global’ indicator have been consistently strong, results from the CCAI were mixed. Matched pair data for the entering cohorts of 1996 and 1997 show gains in flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and total cultural adaptability, but CBA graduates’ scores on average are below Kelly & Myers’ norms for 20-29 year olds. And ONU students reported relatively fewer opportunities for exposure to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in other national surveys.

The assessment data motivated several actions to improve cross-cultural sensitivity. A formal process to provide feedback and action items for improvement based on CCAI results was built into freshman orientation. Management faculty also began to include a discussion of the CCAI instrument and its purpose in management core courses. The CBA also increased its effort to recruit international students, provide study abroad opportunities, and bring in more students through exchange programs, and hire additional staff to support international programs.
Example 3. EBI Undergraduate Student Exit Survey information revealed relatively low student satisfaction with the computer training they received at ONU. In response, the Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) testing program was brought to the campus to provide students the opportunity to become certified in Microsoft Office. Also, the amount of time devoted to PowerPoint in the required computer course was increased. Subsequently, satisfaction on the computer training item has improved.

Reinforced by the results of executive focus groups, EBI surveys supported need for increased emphasis on communication skills. In response, students were required to participate in a Mock Interview Day program as part of selected junior level courses. Reports showed 70 students participated in 2001, with Management majors showing improvement in both verbal & non-verbal communication skills. Corresponding improvements were shown in the EBI study, as “satisfaction with training to improve presentation skills” improved from 5.03 in 1997 to 5.80 in 2002.

Administration and Budget

The assessment budget support participation in various studies, including the ETS Major Field Test ($25 per student in 2003-04), EBI Undergraduate Student Exit Survey ($995 for 2003-04), and the CCAI ($6.50 each from up to 50 students, $6.00 each for 50 to 99 students, and $5.75 each for 100 to 249 students).

Terry Maris, Dean of the College of Business Administration, had this to say about the importance of assessment: “Our initial motivation to create the college assessment program was the attainment of AACSB accreditation, a goal we achieved in April 2003. Looking back, I believe it was like laying the keel of a ship, not a glamorous activity, but nonetheless one that was elemental in providing much needed stability and direction.”
ONU Learning Goals

Mission – The College of Business Administration prepares students to become business and community leaders in a changing world. The College emphasizes active learning, global awareness, entrepreneurial spirit, technological proficiency and applied research.

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS: General Education and Business Core

Graduates with functional knowledge of their major specialty, an appreciation for the interrelation of the functional areas, and broad-based current business knowledge.

Measurable Objectives include:

1. ETS results will show good balance across all functional discipline areas. The mean institutional score will be sustained at or above the 85th percentile.

2. EBI Exit Study will show good student satisfaction with instruction in all functional business areas and cognate areas (mathematics/statistics and communication skills) with average reported scores of 5.0 or higher. Results will be equal to or better than comparable results reported by peer group schools.

Clear understanding of the global, political, social, economic, legal & regulatory context of business.

1. Consistent with objectives stated above, results in relevant items of the ETS examinations and EBI Exit study will demonstrate good understanding across all content areas.

2. Course embedded evaluations, examinations and assignment will require demonstration of understanding in key core business courses (e.g., Ethics in Business Practice; Business Law; Environment of International Business; Principles of Microeconomics; and Principles of Macroeconomics).

Ethical understanding and perspective.

1. Graduates will be able to identify ethical issues in a business problem, consider the implications and present a plan of action that shows ethical awareness; relevant indicators will support. This ability will be demonstrated in selected courses in both the business core and major program.

2. Students will demonstrate ethical understanding and perspective through exercises and examinations embedded in the core required course, Ethics in Business Practice.

Cultural understanding and flexibility.
1. To earn their degree, students will successfully complete a general education program that includes courses in fine arts, humanities, and social sciences. Our general education program, offered through the College of Arts and Sciences, has good recognition as an academically challenging, quality program.

2. Students complete the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) as entering freshmen and again as graduating seniors. Seniors will graduate with scores above the average range (for their age group) on the CCAI.

**Real appreciation for diversity in all its forms.**

1. Students will complete a community service project as part of their degree requirement.

2. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will show sustained improvement in reporting by both freshmen and senior students of opportunities provided for interaction with people of different economic, social, racial, or ethnic backgrounds relative to peer schools.

3. The percentage of students completing college level language studies and study abroad experiences as reported on the NSSE will equal or exceed comparable percentages for peer institutions.

**Analytical, reflective and flexible thinking abilities.**

1. EBI Exit Study will show good student satisfaction with instruction and opportunities to develop these skills in relevant areas with average reported scores of 5.0 or higher on selected questions in the study. Results will be equal to or better than comparable results reported by peer group schools.

2. The capstone policy and strategy course (MGMT 485) will assess every graduate’s skills by requiring students to design, analyze and present a case project to an audience of students and faculty. Case presentations will include a question and answer period with evaluations being submitted by all attending. Submitted evaluations have a material impact on the course grade.

**Active learning/student research, collaborative problem-solving skills.**

1. By 2006, all students graduating with a BSBA degree will have completed a community service project.

2. By 2007, all students graduating with a BSBA degree will have completed a course with a significant service learning component.
3. Joint faculty-student research and student research will continue to be encouraged and supported with a goal of five to ten students having an opportunity to present papers at a national or international conference annually.

**Professional communication skills.**

1. Students successfully complete a three course English sequence having a writing emphasis and following a defined rubric as part of their general education program.

2. Students (accounting and management majors) successfully complete a three course sequence of organizational and professional communications courses as part of their general education program; international business majors complete either a public speaking or interpersonal communications course and language studies through the intermediate level.

3. Students complete an introductory personal computer course that includes instruction in technical communication skills (e.g., design and construction of Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations). Select courses in the business core and major require use and demonstrated competency with these tools.

4. EBI Exit Study will show good student satisfaction with instruction and opportunities to develop these skills with average reported scores of 5.0 or higher on selected questions in the study. Results will be equal to or better than comparable results reported by peer group schools.

5. NSSE results will continue to demonstrate good opportunities in the academic program for students to make class presentations; work on team projects, and use computer technology and electronic media to complete or present class assignments. The percentage of seniors reporting these opportunities on the NSSE will equal or exceed comparable percentages for peer institutions.
ONU Majors – Learning Goals and Objectives

**Mission Statement for the Accounting Major:** To graduate ethical accounting professionals and future leaders who possess a well-rounded perspective about building value in a business and a community by leveraging the interrelationship between people, processes and information.

**PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS: Accounting Major**

*Graduates will be well grounded in fundamental accounting knowledge relating to financial statement preparation and analysis, management decision making, internal controls and business processes, and tax planning.*

*Graduates will be able to analyze, integrate and communicate complex information to facilitate management decision-making.*

*Graduates will be able to work well in a team and possess good communication skills.*

*Graduates will be able to think analytically and critically, and research basic problems independently.*

*Graduates will be aware of graduate school options, certification options, and career options, including eventually starting an accounting business.*

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: Accounting Major**

1. Accounting majors will score better than other business majors on the accounting portion of the ETS major field test.

2. Combined pass rates for first-time and repeat takers will continue to be strong (at or above the State of Ohio mean); results will equal or exceed similar results for peer institution programs.

3. Placement results for all accounting graduates, whether pursuing corporate or public accounting careers, will continue to be strong; reported placement rates approximately one-hundred percent in the one year follow-up study for each graduating class.

4. All accounting graduates will have completed an experiential learning opportunity: e.g., an internship, professional work experience; of professionally related service-learning experience.

5. All accounting graduates will have had course-embedded experience conducting research using electronic data bases.
Mission Statement for the Management Major: The management major develops graduates able to enter a career prepared to manage themselves, a group of subordinates, plus organizations’ human, physical and informational resources.

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS: Management Major

Graduates will be grounded in management theory and practice.

Graduates will be able to apply management theory and practice in solving organizational problems; they will be able to apply the same skills in the context of broader social problems.

Graduates will be capable of conducting business-related research and contributing in a constructive way to managerial problem-solving.

Graduates will be able to work well with others and with a demonstrated appreciation of individual differences and a sensitivity to diversity.

Graduates will be capable of highly professional written and oral communication.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: Management Major

1. Management majors will score better than other business majors on the management portion of the ETS major field test.

2. All management graduates will have completed an experiential learning opportunity (e.g., an internship, SBI project, professional work experience; of professionally related service-learning experience).

3. All management graduates will have completed a minimum of three team projects as part of their degree program.

4. All management graduates will have participated in Mock Interview Day.

5. All management majors will have demonstrated an ability to read, evaluate, and draw conclusions from management research literature.

Mission Statement for International Business & Economics Major: The International Business & Economics major at Ohio Northern University is designed to develop business skills that are necessary to meet the needs of an increasingly global economy and diverse work environment.
PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS: International Business & Economics Major

Graduates are firmly grounded in the theory of international business and economics and are able to apply this knowledge to engage in analytical, reflective and flexible thinking.

Graduates are able to display an understanding of the global, political, social, economic, legal and regulatory context for business.

Graduates display an understanding of and sensitivity to the ethical/social/environmental issues concerning the operational of international business within the global economy.

Graduates have demonstrated cross-cultural understanding and foreign language skills.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: International Business & Economics

1. International Business & Economics majors will score better than other business majors on both the economics and the international portions of the ETS major field test.

2. All graduates will demonstrate competency in at least one modern language through the intermediate college level of studies.

3. All graduates will have successfully completed an approved international experience.

4. All graduates will demonstrate improvement on the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) from the pretest (freshman year) to the posttest (senior year).