



2009-2010 Assessment Plan Report

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2009-2010

Report Date: May 28, 2010
School/College: Professional Studies
Department/Program: Applied Economics
Person completing the Report: Dr. James Forcier, Director

I. **Overview Statement:** *Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:*

a. *Which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.*

A number of new priorities and programmatic changes have emerged since the merger of the School of Business and Management with the College of Professional Studies. Forthcoming, in lieu of the Applied Economics and Organizational Behavior programs, is a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with Business Economics emphasis. The new BBA degree, based on the current undergraduate business degree program (BSBA), was developed by Drs. Richard Stackman, Richard Beer, and James Forcier during the spring 2010 semester. The BBA is expected to share with the BSBA a “core” of courses sufficient to meet AACSB accreditation requirements. Discussion of the particulars of the new program, its overall objectives, and expected outcomes is now underway.

As a result, although Applied Economics’ program objectives have been reviewed and streamlined in conversations with faculty during the 2009-2010 academic year, it became obvious in spring that it was no longer feasible to assess AE program goals using current measures. The AE program likely to be transformed into a BBA with Business Economics Emphasis degree, within the undergraduate business program in the School of Business and Professional Studies, beginning in fall 2010 or Spring 2011.

b. *Who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes*

Program Director Dr. James Forcier, supported by Senior Associate Program Director Dr. Gleb Nikitenko and full-time faculty Prof. Jim Shaw, are the key players in Applied Economics/BBA with Business Economics Emphasis program administration, development, and assessment. Select adjunct faculty members have been involved in the revision of the course curriculum and program objectives.



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II. Please Answer the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:

a. What did you do?

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.).

- i. Basic course policies and procedures have been developed (attendance, participation, other basic requirements) and communicated to all faculty members in the program. The standardized policies have allowed streamlining the process of assessment of student class participation, cohort team building, and overall student engagement with an appreciation of the basic program goals.
- ii. Learning outcomes for current courses were assessed using the following criteria (outcomes and measures will be revised beginning in the semester in which the new BBA degree is adopted):
 - A joint full-time and part-time faculty meeting, which took place in September of 2009, provided rich faculty feedback and ideas regarding AE program priorities and student learning.
 - SUMMA course/instructor evaluations, including written comments.
 - Cohort visits by the Senior Associate Program Director: cohorts at all regional campuses have been brought into the evaluation process; feedback from students has been solicited in addition to in-class faculty observations and assessment.
 - Service learning feedback and assessment following most of the courses taught during the 2009-2010 academic year.
 - An increased number of graded course assignments of various designs based on a variety of methods (qualitative, quantitative, mixed, etc.) which build students' skills in all courses. The faculty have dramatically improved and diversified course assignments to both broaden and refine their measures of student performance, thus providing additional evidence of student learning in individual courses.
 - Course learning objectives and outcomes for the following courses – Microeconomics, Statistics, Accounting, Managerial Economics, Financial Decision-Making, and International Trade and Investment – have been either completely or partially re-evaluated and revised with faculty following the review of SUMMA evaluations and other sources of student and faculty feedback. As a result of this effort, a number of inconsistencies among syllabi, learning outcomes, measurement tools, and assessments were identified and resolved.



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- A WASC direct measure assessment worksheet has been developed (attached) and will be used as one of the tools to assess student learning connected with course and program goals. AE faculty are considering piloting the worksheet in the fall of 2010 in all courses; the data and feedback collected will become components of the program's electronic data portfolio and assessment database which is currently under construction.
- Because of ongoing school and program-specific changes, AE alumni outreach and feedback solicitation have been postponed until the 2010-2011 academic year in order to refine the questions and be able to report on the final changes and some initial outcomes from them.

b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn?

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

On the basis of the initial course assessments, AE program faculty and administrators have discovered significant gaps in incoming students' quantitative skills, including basic math, algebra, and statistics, in addition to inconsistent essential software skills (Excel, PowerPoint, etc.). Although the gaps are being addressed through required AE coursework and advising, there is a need to develop and implement program changes to address the inconsistencies and strengthen student learning of basic skills at the very beginning of their programs.

Accounting and Finance course curricula will continue to be revised to address remaining inconsistencies and strengthen learning outcomes within the constraints of the 7-session course design. Modifications to these revisions may be required as a result of the transition from AE to BBA with Business Economics Emphasis.

c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

Following the deployment of the BBA program, new end-of-course student self-assessments and reports from faculty (WASC direct measure assessment worksheets) will be deployed, as well as pre-program and post-program examinations and transcript analyses.

Results of the above student assessments, faculty reports, and identification of remaining inconsistencies – and the guidance to be gained therefrom – will continue to be shared with all Applied Economics faculty at our next meeting and annually thereafter.



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III. Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:

- a. Program Mission: The Program's mission, while unchanged to date, will be undergoing revision following the deployment of the new BBA with BE Emphasis program.
- b. Program Learning Goals and Outcomes: Learning goals and outcomes will be changed following the deployment of the new BBA degree program.
- c. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes: Rubrics are unchanged, although they will be reexamined following finalization and introduction of the new BBA degree program.
- d. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome: The curriculum map will be updated to reflect the new BBA program and changes relating to it.
- e. WASC direct measure assessment worksheet for faculty: Please see attached worksheet.