

**MSU Departmental Assessment Plan
2007-2009**

Department: College of Business

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Degrees/Majors/Options Offered by Department

B.S. in Business with Options in

Accounting

Finance

Management

Marketing

Master of Professional Accountancy

**Montana State University
College of Business**

**Assessment Plan 2007-2009
May 2007**

Introduction

The College of Business is accredited by AACSB International, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The AACSB standards are rigorous and the College is one of only 10% of schools nationally and internationally which are accredited by the association. In order to maintain accredited status, the College performs ongoing and regular assessment and is committed to continuous improvement. In compliance with AACSB standards, assessment is performed at the College level.

Assessment Management Structure

The College of Business (CoB) faculty articulates its vision and mission as a guide for establishing the College's priorities, goals and use of resources. The faculty revisits its vision and mission every few years to ensure that it continues to represent the will of the faculty, and writes a strategic plan approximately every five years. The vision and mission are as follows:

Vision Statement: The College of Business at Montana State University will provide a locally revered and nationally recognized business education for undergraduate students and in selected areas of graduate study. The programs of study will be distinguished by the personalized attention accorded to students, an integrated and contemporary curriculum, and the dedication of the faculty to creating an extraordinary classroom environment and facilitating career opportunities for graduates.

Mission Statement: The mission of the College of Business is to provide excellence in undergraduate and select graduate business education. To accomplish this, the College:

- Fosters an integrated, experiential, and personalized learning environment.
- Encourages critical thinking, effective communication, life-long learning, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility.

The College is committed to the teacher-scholar model in which faculty members are simultaneously engaged in teaching and research. The College provides service and outreach to its stakeholders in keeping with this aspect of the University's land-grant mission.

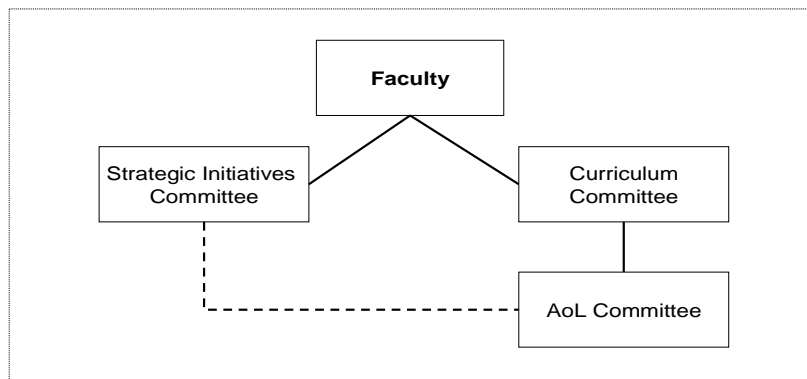
The College created the Strategic Initiatives Committee (SIC) in Spring 2004 to develop, direct, coordinate, and oversee the ongoing strategic planning process and initiatives in support of the CoB mission, vision, and goals. Accordingly, the SIC created an assessment of learning structure, which included identifying the College's learning goals, and developing a preliminary

plan for assessment of learning according to those learning goals. The SIC's membership consists of one faculty representative of each of the College's four options (accounting, finance, management, marketing), a representative of the adjunct faculty, the Assistant Dean of the College, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

In April 2007, at the recommendation of the SIC, the faculty created an Assurance of Learning (AoL) Committee to continue the assessment of learning process, allowing the SIC to focus on other strategic planning matters. The AoL Committee consists of nine members: six tenure-track faculty, two adjunct faculty, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

The AoL Committee will report to the College's Curriculum Committee and indirectly to the SIC to the extent its activities relate to strategic planning:

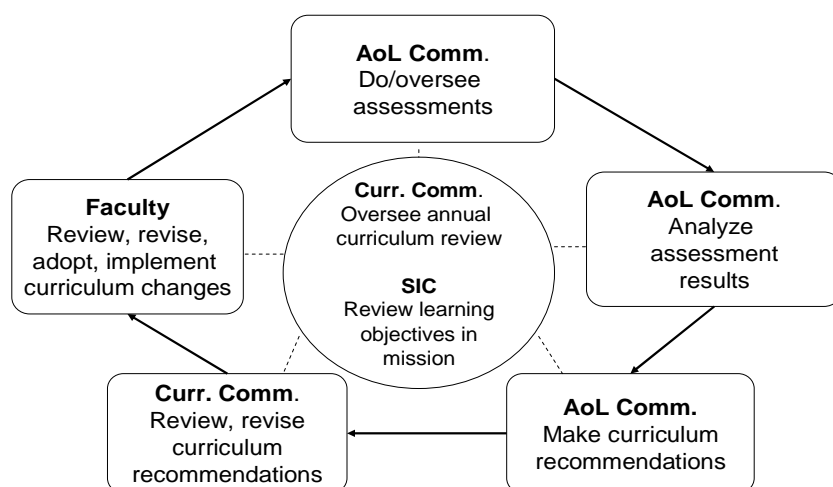
Assurance of Learning Organization



The AoL Committee will manage the assessment of learning process by: identifying, developing and revising assessment methodologies; administering the assessment tools; analyzing the results; and making recommendations for changes to the curriculum to the College Curriculum Committee, which in turn will make recommendations to the faculty.

Concurrently with the AoL Committee's assessment of learning activities, the SIC will continue its strategic management activities, including reviewing the learning goals in the College's mission, and the Curriculum Committee will pursue its systematic review of the College's curriculum. (Please see attached Appendix A for an overview of the Curriculum Committee's procedures for an annual review of the curriculum.)

AoL Process: Who Does What



Degree Objectives and Expected Competencies

As stated above, the College's mission is to provide excellence in undergraduate and select graduate business education. More specifically, the College's goals include encouraging critical thinking, effective communication, life-long learning, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility. Accordingly, the College's assessment of learning plan is focused on these areas.

Business Knowledge

Students shall acquire a common body of knowledge and vocabulary of business. As articulated in course syllabi, students shall gain knowledge of the theory and practices used in management of organizations, operations, and human resources; accounting; corporate finance; marketing; information systems and technology; and law. As they specialize further in their respective option(s), students shall demonstrate their ability to integrate this knowledge in solving business problems.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the process of purposeful, self-regulatory judgment.¹ Critical thinking is defined as the ability to structure and synthesize ambiguous information, to sort relevant from irrelevant information, to apply technical knowledge to new problem settings, to analyze and summarize information and to interpret the results of analysis. Critical thinking makes use of the higher cognitive objectives: application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

¹ The American Philosophical Association. (1990) *Critical Thinking: A Statement Of Expert Consensus For Purposes Of Educational Assessment And Instruction*, ("the Delphi Report"). ERIC Doc. No. ED 315-423, pp. 80.

Written Communication

Effective written communication demonstrates professionalism and the use of standard business English. Such writing is direct, courteous, grammatically correct, and not overly casual. A student's writing must demonstrate appropriate sentence structure, mechanics, grammar, word usage, tone and word choice, organization and focus, and development of ideas.

Oral Communication

Effective oral communication requires facility with standard oral presentational forms including impromptu, extemporaneous, informational, and persuasive speaking.

Life-Long Learning

Following the work of Knowles (1990), the College defines lifelong, self-directed learning as the process by which "individuals take a lifelong initiative, with or without the help of others, to diagnose their own learning needs, formulating their own learning goals, identifying human and material resources for their own learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating their own learning outcomes."

Ethical Decision-Making and Social Responsibility

Rational and ethical decision-making deals with issues of human conduct and the rules that should govern human action. It is characterized by respect for others, an awareness of justice, and sensitivity to the universal application of rules of conduct. Rational and ethical decision-making focuses explicitly on two critical questions: What is right or wrong? and What is good or bad? A graduate of the COB will be competent in rational and ethical decision-making when s/he is able to assess critically her/his actions and the actions of others with respect to these two questions.

Plan for Gathering and Summarizing Data

Appendix B contains a table showing the College's goals and objectives for student learning and summarizing progress to date on assessment of learning in the College. The College has been collecting assessment data on business knowledge since Summer 2005 by means of ETS's Major Field Test in Business, on which our institutional mean is 90%. The College has also been administering the California Critical Thinking Skills Test to our senior students since Spring 2006. Unlike the MFT, the CCTST does not use comparative data based on institutional mean scores, but according to Insight Assessments, the creators of the CCTST, CoB students' average scores of 70-75% correct are very high. The CCTST is typically taken by students in many disciplines, not only business, as well as by working professionals.

The College plans to continue administering these two tests to the College's graduating seniors in order to obtain benchmark data, after which the College will most likely administer the tests only every two or three years.

The College has been administering ACT's WorkKeys Test of Business Writing in BUS 201, Managerial Communications, and requires students to score a three or better as a prerequisite for

formal admission into the College. The test is graded by ACT on a scale of one to five with five being outstanding.

In addition to these assessments already underway, the AoL Committee is planning to employ other methods of assessing critical thinking, effective written and oral communication, ethical decision-making and social responsibility, and life-long learning. The AoL Committee intends to collect additional data on critical thinking through course embedded instruments because comparative data on the CCTST is not available and it is therefore less useful for assessment student performance than is the MFT. The AoL Committee also plans to assess student writing skills in addition to the ACT WorkKeys Test of Business Writing because the WorkKeys Test measures only one kind of writing (memos) whereas the College expects its graduates to write effectively in a variety of formats.

The AoL has developed the following time line for its assessment of learning process:

MSU COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ASSURANCE OF LEARNING TIME LINE		
Date	Item	Responsibility
Summer 2007	Complete test round of assessments in BUS 474 of written communication, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, including data collection and analysis	AoL Comm.
	Continue MFT and CCTST in BUS 474; analyze results	Brown
	Collect and analyze ACT Writing Test data	Adams Dana
	Write AoL report to faculty for distribution at August retreat	Dana AoL Comm.
	Create CoB AoL website	Dana
Fall 2007	Complete first round of assessments in 474 on written communication, critical thinking, ethical decision making	AoL Comm
	Decide on oral communication assessment methodology	AoL Comm
	Decide on life-long learning assessment methodology	AoL Comm
	Continue MFT and CCTST in BUS 474	Brown/Reilly
	AoL progress report to Curriculum Committee	AoL Comm
	Discuss AoL process with Student Advisory Board	Dana

**MSU COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING TIME LINE**

Date	Item	Responsibility
	Publicize AoL process to students	Dana
Jan. 2008	Faculty retreat: review status of AoL process, seek input; prepare for AACSB peer review team visit	AoL Comm Curriculum Comm. Dana
Spring 2008	Complete first round of oral communication assessment	AoL Comm
	Complete analysis of all data collected so far	AoL Comm
	Write and present progress report to Curriculum Comm	AoL Comm
	Report to faculty	Curriculum Comm
Summer 2008	Plan next year's AoL activities	AoL Comm

Plan for Utilizing Data

Analyzing assessment of learning data and making appropriate curricular changes based on the data is the whole key to an effective assurance of learning process. Therefore, one of the central charges to the AoL Committee is to analyze the results of its assessments and to make recommendations to the Curriculum Committee, which in turn will review the data and make curriculum change recommendations to the full faculty.

To date, the College has collected data on student knowledge of business, critical thinking skills, and writing skills. All data indicate that students are meeting the learning goals of the College. The AoL Committee will engage in deeper assessments of critical thinking and written communication, however, and suspects it will find areas needing improvement. Data will also be collected in the next year or two on oral communication, ethical decision-making and social responsibility, and life-long learning.

The AoL Committee initially, and thereafter the Curriculum Committee and the faculty, will use the data collected to determine whether student learning is meeting the College's expectations. If not, changes will be implemented in an effort to improve student learning in these areas.

Appendix A

**MSU College of Business
Curriculum Review Process
April 2007**

Objectives: To codify a process that:

- a) establishes a regular cycle of curriculum review
- b) assesses the curriculum's consistency with the COB's mission
- c) evaluates the adequacy of current course offerings
- d) reviews the (cross-sectional and sequential) relationships across courses
- e) ensures curriculum's relevancy to business practice
- f) reviews and revises the curriculum in response to assessment of learning results

Curriculum Groupings	Review Responsibility	Frequency projecting a 4- year cycle, with years 2 and 4 coinciding with university catalog updates	Broad Guidelines
Non-Business Pre-Core (Math, Econ, Stat, CS)	Option Coordinators	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevancy of content to skill development needed for business core
Business Pre-Core (100-200)	COB Curriculum Committee + Associate Deans + BUS 101 and 201 coordinators	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of content (comparable to other universities' courses?) • Rigor (sufficient preparation for subsequent courses?) • Feedback from instructors (current 100-200 instructors and upper-division instructors)
Business Core (300-400 level)	BUS Course Coordinators	Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course mix right? • Overlap? (with other BUS courses? with option electives?) • Relevance to current business environments • Feedback from upper-division instructors (current 300-400 instructors)
Option courses (200-300-400)	Options	Years 2 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do courses meet option objectives? • Feedback from advisory council, recruiters, and alumni
Minors (Ent, MIT, IB)	(appointment of) Minor Coordinators	Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do courses meet minor objectives? • Are course options clearly communicated?

Note: We agree that reviews will not always lead to curriculum changes.

Deliverables:

The reviewers will provide written recommendations to the Strategic Initiatives and COB Curriculum committees and COB administration for changing courses, course content, course mix, etc.

For each recommendation, the reviewers will provide:

- Rationale
- How needs were assessed
- Sources for information and input

If the reviewers recommend no changes, then they will provide a brief summary (about one page) of the rationale, method for assessing needs, and sources for information and input for the decision(s) to continue the curriculum as currently designed.

Adopted April 2007

Appendix B

College of Business Assessment of Learning Plan, June 2007			
Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes	Goals & Objectives	Assessment Methodology	Status of Assessment
<p>Knowledge of Business Students shall acquire a common body of knowledge and vocabulary of business. As articulated in course syllabi, students shall gain knowledge of the theory and practices used in management of organizations, operations, and human resources; accounting; corporate finance; marketing; information systems and technology; and law. As they specialize further in their respective option(s), students shall demonstrate their ability to integrate this knowledge in solving business problems.</p>	<p>Goal & Objectives Students will have strong working knowledge of fundamental concepts in accounting, finance, management, marketing, information technology, strategy and law.</p> <p>The College's institutional mean on the Major Field Test will regularly fall in the top quartile.</p>	<p>Major Field Test</p> <p>Alumni, employer, placement surveys</p>	<p>MFT administered in BUS 474 every semester since Summer 2005.</p> <p>The College's institutional mean on the MFT as of Sumer 2007 is 90%.</p> <p>Responses to Spring 2006 Alumni Survey (n=103) show CoB alumni more satisfied than alumni of Select 6 institutions: (mean scores on scale of 1-7/Select 6 mean):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business degree provided knowledge and skills to succeed: 5.77/5.39 • Effectiveness of skills training: 5.40/5.21 • Effectiveness of developing abilities: 5.32/5.17

College of Business Assessment of Learning Plan, June 2007

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes	Goals & Objectives	Assessment Methodology	Status of Assessment
<p>Critical Thinking Critical thinking is the process of purposeful, self-regulatory judgment.ⁱ Critical thinking is defined as the ability to structure and synthesize ambiguous information, to sort relevant from irrelevant information, to apply technical knowledge to new problem settings, to analyze and summarize information and to interpret the results of analysis. Critical thinking makes use of the higher cognitive objectives: application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.</p>	<p>Goal Students will be able to engage in critical thinking to solve business problems.</p> <p>Objectives A. Students will be able to: 1. Analyze disparate and conflicting information from a variety of sources. (Analysis) 2. Evaluate, clarify and classify information to determine its relevance to solving an issue or problem. (Evaluation). 3. Provide solutions to problems and testable predictions regarding specific situations by using general principles. (Deduction) . 4. Infer general principles by examining specific examples (Induction) 5. Make a recommendation on the basis of circumstantial evidence and prior conclusions rather than on the basis of direct observation. (Inference).</p> <p>B. Students will regularly average a score of 75% correct on the CCTST.ⁱⁱ</p> <p>C. Students on average will achieve a score of at least “satisfactory” on the course embedded measure.</p>	<p>California Critical Thinking Skills Test</p> <p>Course-embedded measure in BUS 474.</p>	<p>CCTST has been administered in BUS 474 since Spring 2006. Mean score is typically 70-75% correct.</p> <p>Rubric for course embedded measure in development, will be tested in summer 2007 in BUS 474</p> <p>2006 Senior Survey (n=12), scale of 1-5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professors emphasize higher order thinking skills: 4.17 • Major courses helped respect and value different points of view: 4.08 • Major courses helped critically analyze arguments: 4.25 • Major courses helped think logically and deductively: 4.38 • Major courses helped think creatively: 4.04

College of Business Assessment of Learning Plan, June 2007

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes	Goals & Objectives	Assessment Methodology	Status of Assessment
<p>Effective Written Communication Effective written communication demonstrates professionalism and the use of standard business English. Such writing is direct, courteous, grammatically correct, and not overly casual. A student’s writing must demonstrate appropriate sentence structure, mechanics, grammar, word usage, tone and word choice, organization and focus, and development of ideas.</p>	<p>Goal Students will be able to communicate effectively and professionally in writing.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organize and develop ideas effectively; b. Adopt an appropriate tone; c. Employ correct grammar, sentence structure and mechanics; d. Use appropriate vocabulary; and e. Correctly cite sources for facts, quotations and ideas. 2. Students on average will achieve a score of at least “satisfactory” on the course embedded measure 3. In order to be formally admitted to the College, students must achieve a score of at least 3 on the WorkKeys Test of Business Writing 	<p>WorkKeys Test of Business Writing</p> <p>Course embedded measure in BUS 474</p>	<p>WorkKeys Test of Business Writing has been administered in BUS 201 since Fall 2005. A score of at least Level 3 is required for formal admission to the College for all students.</p> <p>80-83% of business students in Bus 201 are scoring at Level 3 or higher.</p> <p>Rubric for course embedded measure in development, will be tested in summer 2007 in BUS 474.</p> <p>2006 Senior Survey (n=12), scale of 1-5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major courses helped write clearly: 3.79 • Major courses helped write persuasive arguments: 4.04

College of Business Assessment of Learning Plan, June 2007

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes	Goals & Objectives	Assessment Methodology	Status of Assessment
<p>Effective Oral Communication Effective oral communication requires facility with standard oral presentational forms including impromptu, extemporaneous, informational, and persuasive speaking.</p>	<p>Goal Students will be able to communicate effectively and professionally in oral presentations.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organize and develop ideas effectively; b. Employ technology effectively in support of the message. c. Speak extemporaneously with minimal hesitations and fillers; d. Adopt an appropriate tone; e. Use appropriate vocabulary; f. Employ correct grammar and sentence structure; and g. Use appropriately the time allotted for the presentation. 2. Students on average will achieve a score of at least “satisfactory” on the course embedded measure 	<p>Course embedded measure</p>	<p>Course embedded measure (rubric) in development.</p> <p>2006 Senior Survey (n=12), scale of 1-5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major courses helped speak confidently in public settings: 4.50

College of Business Assessment of Learning Plan, June 2007

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes	Goals & Objectives	Assessment Methodology	Status of Assessment
<p>Ethical Decision-Making & Social Responsibility Rational and ethical decision-making deals with issues of human conduct and the rules that should govern human action. It is characterized by respect for others, an awareness of justice, and sensitivity to the universal application of rules of conduct. Rational and ethical decision-making focuses explicitly on two critical questions: What is right or wrong? and What is good or bad? A graduate of the COB will be competent in rational and ethical decision-making when s/he is able to assess critically her/his actions and the actions of others with respect to these two questions.</p>	<p>Goal Students will appreciate the ethical and social responsibility dimensions of business decision-making.</p> <p>Objectives Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize the ethical and societal implications of proposed actions; 2. Effectively employ decision-making tools to evaluate the ethical and societal effects of a variety of options; and 3. Make a sound decision in accordance with the analysis and evaluation of options. 	<p>Subset of MFT scores on legal and social environment questions</p> <p>Course-embedded measure in BUS 474.</p>	<p>MFT is being administered in BUS 474. Students score in 90% of law and social environment subset of questions</p> <p>Rubric for course embedded measure in development, will be tested in summer 2007 in BUS 474.</p>

College of Business Assessment of Learning Plan, June 2007

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes	Goals & Objectives	Assessment Methodology	Status of Assessment
<p>Life-Long Learning Following the work of Knowles (1990), the COB defines lifelong, self-directed learning as the process by which "individuals take a lifelong initiative, with or without the help of others, to diagnose their own learning needs, formulating their own learning goals, identifying human and material resources for their own learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating their own learning outcomes."</p>	<p>Goal Students shall acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to take a lifelong initiative, with or without the help of others, to diagnose their own learning needs, formulate their own learning goals, choose and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate their own learning outcomes. (Knowles 1990)</p> <p>Objectives Students shall be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate effective team skills 2. Identify their own learning needs and preferred learning styles 3. Demonstrate the ability effectively to research information in furtherance of their own learning 4. Demonstrate effective critical thinking skills 	<p>CCTST</p> <p>Course-embedded measures</p>	<p>No course embedded measures developed yet for team skills, identification of learning styles, or research skills.</p> <p>Critical thinking skills are assessed through the CCTST and course embedded measures as described above.</p> <p>2006 Senior Survey (n=12), scale of 1-5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major courses helped learn independently: 4.25 • Major courses broadened intellectual interests: 4.00 • MSU provided opportunities to collaborate in teams: 4.70

ⁱ The American Philosophical Association. (1990) *Critical Thinking: A Statement Of Expert Consensus For Purposes Of Educational Assessment And Instruction*, ("the Delphi Report"). ERIC Doc. No. ED 315-423, pp. 80.

ⁱⁱ Unlike the MFT, the CCTST does not use comparative data based on institutional mean scores, but according to Insight Assessments, the creators of the CCTST, 70-75% correct is a very high score. The CCTST is typically taken by students in many disciplines, not only business, as well as against working professionals..