This past fall the Undergraduate (UG) Curriculum Committee continued to address several issues relative to “Closing the Loop” (CTL) in the assessment process. We remind readers of this report that CTL activities are crucial to having a healthy and vibrant assessment process.

The July 2008 College of Business (COB) Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Assessment Plan specifically called out our committee to review COB goals and to ensure that these goals were being met with regard to student learning. Much information has been distributed to COB faculty through convocation reports, faculty meetings and committee minutes to keep faculty in the loop about the CTL process and results. The UG Curriculum Committee met 16 times this past year (e.g., 8 times both in the Fall and Spring 2010 semesters) to review assessment data and to determine if and how CTL was necessary.

Recent Assessment of Learning (AoL) reports indicate that of our five COB goals, students fell short as effective communicators in Goal 1a: Students can write effectively. For instance, less than 80% of our students met or exceeded expectations on conventions of writing (70%), clarity of writing (32%) and rhetorical choices in writing (32%). Our committee has implemented many changes in how to improve student writing. As with all changes and actions in this report, please see our committee minutes for a more detailed account.

With regard to Goal 1b: Students can make effective oral presentations, data collected suggest that student learning was more than acceptable in all three objectives. For instance, more than 80% of our students met or exceeded expectations in being able to dress professionally and use appropriate language (96%), being able to use speech targeted to appropriate audience (83%), and being able to use effective delivery methods including eye contact, tone and flow (96%).

With regard to Goal 2: Students can demonstrate knowledge of diversity, data collected suggests that student learning was less than acceptable in two out of three objectives. For instance, less than 80% of our students met or exceeded expectations on being able to discern between helpful and detrimental stereotypes (73%) and being able to identify individual characteristics that affect social perception and strategies that counter negative influence on social perception (66%). However, 85% of students were able to identify stereotypes.

With regard to Goal 3: Students are effective users of information technology, data collected suggests that student learning was acceptable in two out of the three objectives. For instance, more than 80% of our students met or exceeded expectations in being able to use information technology to manipulate information into a form usable in business decision making (84%) and being able to use information technology to disseminate information to others (80%). However, only 77% of students were able to acquire information using relevant information technologies.

With regard to Goal 5a: Students can comprehend ethical implications in business, data suggests that student learning was less than acceptable in all four objectives. For instance, less than 80% of our students met or exceeded expectations in being able to describe alternative ethical perspectives (79%), being able to identify relevant stakeholders (71%), being able to propose alternatives (48%), and being able to explain appropriateness (59%).
CLOSING THE LOOP: The Management Department subsequently developed a new assessment instrument that is being re-piloted in the Fall 2010 semester. The UG Curriculum Committee noted that this is another example of a CTL activity to better improve student learning as all Mgt 309 courses have been subsequently changed as a result of the assessment process.

Other Issues in Fall 2010

We discussed other issues relative to changes in course prerequisites throughout the COB. Please refer to the specifics of these changes in the Fall 2010 UG Curriculum committee minutes.

Primary Issue for Spring 2011

The primary issue our committee needs to address will be the review of Goal 4: Students can solve problems and think critically, with emphasis on the critical thinking component of student learning (Goal 4b).

We decided to use both existing English 111 and English 203 courses as a filter to determine who can critically think/write. Those who get at least a “B” grade in BOTH courses do NOT have to take a remedial writing course (this course would be identified and coordinated with the English Department) like English 218.

We subsequently decided to pilot test the existing critical thinking rubric for Goal 4b in each COB department in the Spring 2011. Our committee asks each department head to select one 300 and above class to use the critical thinking rubric for assessment purposes in Spring 2011.