New Mexico State University
College of Business – Assessment Plan
Master of Business Administration Program
2005 – 2006

The following document is based on a committee report was created by the MBA Assessment Subcommittee to begin the development of the assessment process for the MBA program. The document was prepared by Judy Weisinger on May 17, 2006. The plan sets for the MBA program learning goals

Program-level Learning Goals

The objectives of the MBA program are that all graduating MBA students:

1. Demonstrate well-developed interpersonal skills by successfully working in teams.

2. Demonstrate well-developed critical thinking skills by completing a major business project requiring problem solving, decision making, and other analytical skills.

3. Demonstrate well-developed oral and written communication skills by the producing high quality written work and making high quality oral presentations of said work.

4. Demonstrate well-developed leadership skills.

5. Demonstrate knowledge and adaptability in cross-cultural situations, global situations, and negotiations.

6. Demonstrate proficiency in quantitative analysis.

7. Demonstrate proficiency in dealing with ethical and legal issues in business.

Assessing Our Performance on These Goals

The subcommittee’s next task was to identify where and how to assess students on our defined MBA program goals. Each subcommittee member was to identify within their own departments where (e.g., in which courses) assessment might take place. Several courses where identified:

1. Clearly, the MBA “capstone” courses would be a logical place to assess. Thus, the first courses identified were:
   a. BA 502
   b. MGT 590

   It is important to note that these classes already require a major class activity (a project paper and presentation in BA 502, and a written case in MGT 590) that could be used for assessment purposes.

2. Next, subcommittee members worked with faculty to preliminarily identify other potential courses where assessment might take place. At this point, these are:
   a. ACCT 503
   b. MGT 503
c. FIN 503

d. BLAW 502

e. MKTG 503

f. (MKTG 687 (International)- not required course)

We probably do not need to assess in all of these courses. Included with this report is a matrix indicating which key goals could be assessed in which courses. This can be used as guide to figure out where best to assess for particular goals when those goals are not adequately captured by assessment in the capstone courses. Additional courses may be added as the committee sees fit.

3. A draft assessment form was developed (by Bonnie Green (MBA) and Kevin Boberg (Dean)) then discussed and revised in the Graduate Committee. It was agreed that we should implement this form in BA to facilitate the collection of assessment data this term. (See attached form). This particular form was used for all of the BA 502 student presentations for Spring 2006. Bobbie Green collected these data. This form targets assessment in three of our defined goals, related to communication skills, analytical skills, and teamwork.

4. Judy Weisinger (MGT) then followed up with faculty in these particular courses/departments to discuss possible assessment strategies. She is also working with Sherry Mills (ACCT) to work up an assessment implementation plan that could be presented at Fall Convocation. (Sherry is on the undergraduate assessment committee, and also on the Quality Committee, which is concerned about assessment of both undergraduate and graduate business programs.)

5. Based on much of the assessment literature, and based upon the work of the undergraduate assessment committee, we need to think about several issues as we go forward with our MBA assessment.

a. **WHO** will assess? It is common, for interrater reliability purposes, to have a ‘team’ of assessors. This team might be composed of a professor, an administrator or staff member, and someone outside of the college (e.g., someone from the Writing Center if assessing written communication skills). One of things the Graduate Committee will need to decide is who will conduct assessment for the MBA program. (For example, does one team do all of the assessment? Who serves on a team? How will this be decided? How will the team rotate? etc., etc.)

b. **WHAT IS USED TO ASSESS?** More effective assessment measures typically include specific **rubrics** that the assessment team can use. This is a bit different from the broader draft BA 502 assessment form we are piloting this term. For example, there are rubrics that are used specifically to assess writing skills. There are also rubrics for specifically assessing oral communication skills, and so on for other types of skills and abilities. These rubrics ask evaluators to rate the object on a variety of dimensions related to the goal (e.g., written communication, oral communication, analytical skills, etc.). So, we now have identified key program goals and drafted a form. However, these goals will likely need some tweaking, for example:

> Demonstrate well-developed oral and written communication skills by the producing high quality written work and making high quality oral presentations of said work.

We should separate the oral and written into separate goals, and then assess each with specific rubrics.
Demonstrate well-developed critical thinking skills by completing a major business project requiring problem solving, decision making, and other analytical skills.

We have bundled several goals into one—critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making. Again, we may need to identify them separately then employ rubrics for each where possible.

Demonstrate knowledge and adaptability in cross-cultural situations, global situations, and negotiations.

It was pointed out in several discussions about this goal that in some cases (e.g., MGT 590), we might be able to assess knowledge of cross-cultural/global issues, but not behavior (e.g., “adaptability”). Also, “cross-cultural” and “global” mean different things, depending upon the area (e.g., management, finance, marketing, etc.).

Thus, we will need to tweak our five broad goals a bit. Then, we will need to identify how best to assess these using solid rubrics. We can start with BA 502 and MGT 590. Then, use the attached matrix to determine where additional assessment could take place.

c. HOW will assessment take place? Another issue we need to resolve is exactly how (in terms of process) will assessment be accomplished?

i. For example, in BA 502, this could be accomplished by the assessment team applying the rubric(s) to both the written papers and the presentations. Consistent with assessment methods, we might sample from the population of papers and presentations. Or, we might decide to do them all, since numbers are generally small. Going back to the WHO questions above, this would mean making sure that the assessors attended the presentations and evaluated the papers at the end of the Spring term. Electronic copies of the papers could be saved for these purposes. (NOTE: Because of client confidentiality, there may need to be some additional safeguards built into BA 502 assessments.)

ii. In MGT 590, the same process could be followed using the written student cases (e.g., e-copies saved for evaluation). According to Dr. Adler, these are turned in mid-term, rather than at the end of the term. (It is not clear whether the students also present these, but if so, the similar process to BA 502 assessment could be followed.)

iii. A similar process needs to be determined for the other assessment activities.

d. WHERE will the data be maintained?

i. If you can imagine an assessment team using various rubrics to assess student activities in various courses over even a year, it becomes clear that appropriate storing and maintenance of this data will be very important. The committee will need to decide how this is to be accomplished. There are several potential methods:
   - Hardcopy assessments which would need to be summarized, communicated, and filed by someone. Also, there would need to be defined process for organizing the assessments.
- Construct a database of some sort for the purposes of storing and maintaining assessment data. (Assessments would still be done via hardcopies.) Again, there would need to be defined process for organizing the assessments.
- Use a software package that would facilitate the collection of student work, assessment storage and assessment reporting. (Sherry Mills and Kathy Brook have seen a demo of such a package, called LiveText. The package also allows students to develop e-portfolios of their work. This may be of more value at the UG level than at the Grad level, but should be discussed.)

ii. While a software package would provide the most efficiency in terms of the assessment process, there are also associated costs. These trade-offs will need to be balanced in deciding where the assessment data will be collected and stored. In any event, a well-defined structure will need to be in place to facilitate assessment of any sort. The GC needs to decide whether this should be a standing structure (e.g., an MBA assessment team) or a subcommittee of the GC, and how membership will be decided.

Summary

The GC should formalize an assessment plan, based upon the above, for the upcoming academic year. Key elements of this plan include defining:

1. WHO assesses? **Recommendation**: A team of composed of three members—a faculty member, a staff member and an outside member. This should be a standing group that works closely with both the GC and with the MBA Director. Initially, this team’s composition should be maintained for two years.

2. WHAT is used to assess? **Recommendations**: (1) restate key goals into multiple goals so that each is measuring one specific skill/trait; (2) further develop our test measures by integrating usage of established rubrics (AACSB site includes some key links to these) to measure specific skills/objectives.

3. HOW will assessment be accomplished? **Recommendations**: Begin assessing in both BA 502 and MGT 590 next academic year.

4. WHERE to maintain data? **Recommendations**: Sherry Mills, who is doing UG assessment and who sits on the Quality Committee, is to discuss with CEC the advantages of using the LiveText software package. If the package is not adopted, then the GC should process with plans for using hardcopy assessment evaluations, and developing a process for collection, storing and reporting of this data.

5. REPORTING. **Recommendation**: Concurrent with the above tasks, key MBA performance standards should be set. These refer to what we will consider acceptable for each goal. For example, “80% of students are scored as proficient in the area of effective written communication.” There are many ways to establish standards. **But for the reported assessment data to have any meaning, such standards need to be established and agreed upon early on.**