

Learning Goals for the M.B.A. Program

The M.B.A. degree program in the College of Business has the following learning goals. These outcomes are conceived of as formative concepts developed through coursework that are predictive of success on the final business plan submitted in the Capstone Course. The outcomes, therefore, will be assessed in the context of a student's final demonstration of achievement in the Capstone business plan project. A third-party will conduct the assessment.

Develop and implement leadership systems throughout an organization by being able to:

- ✓ Conduct an environmental scan, competitor analysis and assessment of marketplace position
- ✓ Design a strategy, action plans, goals, and objectives for an organization that meet the changing nature of the marketplace
- ✓ Create a mission statement, determine the accurate vision and generate a values statement that mobilize employees and other important stakeholders
- ✓ Design an effective leadership system to improve organizational performance and sustainability
- ✓ Identify and critique leadership theory and apply the appropriate theory to the context
- ✓ Assess a leadership system and make recommendations for improvement.

Embrace strong ethical values and acknowledge moral and legal obligations to the multitude of publics impacted by the organization by being able to:

- ✓ Assess and enumerate the publics and stakeholders affected by organizational decisions
- ✓ Quantify the environmental and social consequences of organization policies
- ✓ Apply ethical decision-making theory to a situation
- ✓ Ensure that all organizational actions meet and exceed legal and regulatory requirements.

Design, align and integrate strategic, tactical and operational plans by being able to:

- ✓ Analyze environmental forces, industry structure and the value chain
- ✓ Build internal capabilities and establish a sustainable competitive advantage
- ✓ Design global strategy and integration
- ✓ Demonstrate a working understanding of systems theory, recognizing that organizations are complex systems. Candidates should be able to address high complexity using a framework based on theory
- ✓ Create a comprehensive strategy and action plans which are systematically executed through processes that ensure proper implementation and execution
- ✓ Demonstrate a working understanding of statistics and methods for reducing variance in operations
- ✓ Execute a comprehensive organizational assessment audit and design an improvement plan for increasing organizational performance.

Identify of customers, important publics, and other critical requirements, and design systems for incorporating requirements throughout the organization by being able to:

- ✓ Apply a systems approach in how marketing impacts all functional areas of business
- ✓ Recognize marketing as the system that interacts with the environment of the business firm
- ✓ Integrate customer focus into strategy, planning and operations
- ✓ Assess the overall marketing posture of an organization and make valid recommendations for improving existing marketing functions
- ✓ Propose theories and methods for engraining a customer focused culture throughout an organization.

Design and use information systems and methods for collecting, analyzing and disseminating data by being able to:

- ✓ Select and apply descriptive and predictive data analytics methods using statistical software
- ✓ Demonstrate the concept of risk in the context of decision-making and analytics
- ✓ Quantify insights about business systems, quality assurance, performance, and business decision processes
- ✓ Understand data features and basic manipulation and cleansing of data
- ✓ Exhibit methods for accumulating, cataloguing and using knowledge in an organization.

Marshal human resource systems to accomplish organizational tasks.

- ✓ Systematically align human resource processes to support organization-wide strategies, goals, objectives, and action plans
- ✓ Demonstrate knowledge of theories of psychology and motivation and show a command of applying those theories in a unique context
- ✓ Design organization training to support overall HR objectives
- ✓ Devise methods for tracking leader and worker performance
- ✓ Utilize knowledge of organizational behavior to assess performance management systems.

Create effective operational processes, support services and supplier networks by being able to:

- ✓ Design operations for implementing action plans for the accomplishment of strategies, goals and objectives
- ✓ Ensure that support services are designed to bolster organizational performance and meet the requirements of both internal and external customers
- ✓ Create systems for assessing the effectiveness of operations and eliminating variance and errors
- ✓ Understand key drivers of supply chain performance and their inter-relationships with strategy and other functions of the company, such as marketing, manufacturing and accounting
- ✓ Assess and coordinate inter-firm and intra-firm processes through technological interfaces, so that programs are implemented for quick and reliable response

Monitor performance through financial, accounting and regulatory compliance by being able to:

- ✓ Assess varying strategies and methods for obtaining funds for operating the organization and managing cash flow
- ✓ Design and implement methods for obtaining financial resources to implement strategies and action plans that meet the goals and objectives of the organization
- ✓ Design and implement financial systems for ensuring that the organization complies with regulatory reporting standards
- ✓ Analyze and assess the profit impact of operational costs
- ✓ Critique financial statements for projected and actual
- ✓ Create budgets for operational improvements, human resource impacts and capital improvements
- ✓ Evaluate risks to the organization and make suggestions for ameliorating those risks
- ✓ Examine, where appropriate, implications of foreign exchange markets and international trade implications
- ✓ Prepare a comprehensive financial analysis report to include different financial aspects of publicly traded corporations
- ✓ Propose improvement methods for maximizing the use of funds internally for profit optimization through the use of assessment of internal rates of return and net present value.

Communicate effectively through written, oral and visual media by being able to:

- ✓ Demonstrate ability to design and communicate effectively through oral presentations
- ✓ Superlative proficiency in business writing skills including, memos, executive summaries, business letters, and business plans
- ✓ Exude excellence in business etiquette and demeanor including non-verbal communication skills
- ✓ Deliver a clear, professional presentation using proper grammar, punctuation, proper referencing, and understandable analysis of data.

Assessment Plan for the M.B.A. Program

The College of Business uses the following assessment tools to monitor achievement toward the College of Business mission and the learning goals of the M.B.A. degree program:

Faculty / Instructional Quality

- **Course Evaluations:** Students in every business class use a standard form to evaluate the quality of instruction received in their courses each semester. These results inform the faculty member's annual performance review and help guide curricula development.
- **Faculty Activity Reports:** Faculty complete comprehensive reports of teaching, advising, service, and research activities prior to their annual performance review. This report serves as a check of AQ/PQ status as well as a valuable self-evaluation tool for faculty.
- **AACSB Tables 9/10:** The College monitors the deployment of faculty resources within each major area and degree program by tracking the percentage of student-credit-hours taught by qualified or full-time faculty. These tables are reviewed each academic year.

Student Outcomes / Progress

- **Student Exit Interviews:** The Dean and Associate Dean schedule end-of-program exit interviews with graduating M.B.A. students to obtain first-hand feedback on programs.
- **Alumni 5-Year Survey:** Five years post-graduation, all M.B.A. alumni will receive a survey assessing the extent to which the M.B.A. program effectively prepared their career.
- **Direct Assessment:** The M.B.A. program uses a rigorous student selection process and has developed a comprehensive, objective assessment rubric used by external reviewers to assess the capstone business plan. These serve to ensure student achievement.
- **Curricular Benchmarking:** The College of Business frequently compares the curricula of all of its degree programs in business to that of similar programs at peer and aspirant schools to ensure that course and program offerings are up-to-date with best current practice and are competitive in the liberal arts business education environment.

Recent Assessment Activity in the M.B.A. Program

M.B.A. students (n=58) took an **M.B.A. alumni survey** in Spring 2012. An additional 42 M.B.A. students took a **process improvement** survey in Summer 2012. The results were as follows:

“Given your experience with our curriculum, how do you feel the mix of topics below was balanced?”

		Require Less		About Right			Require More	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Finance	4.60	1	1	1	24	16	8	2
		2%	2%	2%	45%	30%	15%	4%
Accounting	4.52	1	0	4	26	13	8	2
		2%	0%	7%	48%	24%	15%	4%
Marketing	4.29	1	1	2	29	16	3	0
		2%	2%	4%	56%	31%	6%	0%
Management	4.30	1	3	1	31	10	8	0
		2%	6%	2%	57%	19%	15%	0%
Communications	4.25	2	1	7	23	12	5	2
		4%	2%	13%	44%	23%	10%	4%
Ethics and Law	4.39	0	2	5	28	10	7	2
		0%	4%	9%	52%	19%	13%	4%
Supply Chain Management	4.55	0	1	5	24	14	5	4
		0%	2%	9%	45%	26%	9%	8%
Statistics	4.11	2	1	7	33	6	0	5
		4%	2%	13%	61%	11%	0%	9%
Economics	4.63	0	1	1	31	11	4	6
		0%	2%	2%	57%	20%	7%	11%
Entrepreneurship	4.72	2	1	3	17	15	11	4
		4%	2%	6%	32%	28%	21%	8%

“Overall, how effectively do you feel your courses covered the following content?”

		Very Ineffectively			Effectively		Very Effectively	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Finance	4.40	0	3	9	18	10	10	2
		0%	6%	17%	35%	19%	19%	4%
Accounting	4.13	0	5	8	24	11	4	2
		0%	9%	15%	44%	20%	7%	4%
Marketing	4.77	0	3	4	17	12	12	5
		0%	6%	8%	32%	23%	23%	9%
Management	4.56	0	4	7	15	14	11	3
		0%	7%	13%	28%	26%	20%	6%
Communications	4.11	2	5	10	14	14	6	2
		4%	9%	19%	26%	26%	11%	4%
Ethics and Law	3.98	3	8	6	14	12	6	2
		6%	18%	9%	42%	18%	6%	4%
Supply Chain Management	3.52	3	8	13	21	3	2	2
		6%	15%	25%	40%	6%	4%	4%
Statistics	3.96	3	5	6	25	10	2	3
		6%	9%	11%	46%	19%	4%	6%
Economics	4.67	0	5	5	12	19	7	6
		0%	9%	9%	22%	35%	13%	11%
Entrepreneurship	4.32	2	7	7	13	9	10	5
		4%	13%	13%	25%	17%	19%	9%

“Indicate your level of satisfaction with the following elements of the MBA program:”

		Very Dissatisfied			Neutral		Very Satisfied	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Course registration process	5.40	2	1	4	2	7	14	12
		5%	2%	10%	5%	17%	33%	29%
Financial agreement process	4.63	1	3	5	10	8	10	4
		2%	7%	12%	24%	20%	24%	10%
Core course offerings each semester	5.05	2	1	2	5	12	16	3
		5%	2%	5%	12%	29%	39%	7%
Elective course offerings each semester	4.26	3	6	5	4	14	7	3
		7%	14%	12%	10%	33%	17%	7%
Quality of student advising	5.40	2	1	2	4	3	24	6
		5%	2%	5%	10%	7%	57%	14%
Knowledge of MBA staff	5.86	0	1	0	3	7	20	11
		0%	2%	0%	7%	17%	48%	26%
Accessibility of MBA staff	6.26	0	0	0	3	3	16	20
		0%	0%	0%	7%	7%	38%	48%
MBA staff helping me achieve goals	5.71	1	1	2	1	9	14	14
		2%	2%	5%	2%	21%	33%	33%
Communications from the MBA office	5.79	1	0	2	3	5	18	13
		2%	0%	5%	7%	12%	43%	31%
Helpfulness of course descriptions	4.64	2	4	5	5	9	14	3
		5%	10%	12%	12%	21%	33%	7%
Instructors teach course as described	5.55	1	0	0	4	12	19	6
		2%	0%	0%	10%	29%	45%	14%

Entrepreneurship, Economics, and Finance are the most desired areas for enhancement of the curricula, while Ethics, Supply Chain Management, and Statistics are currently being taught least effectively. A curriculum revision targeted for Fall 2013 implementation will address many of these student concerns. The curricular changes include a new capstone course experience, an additional course in statistics, and further elective course offerings in entrepreneurship and business analysis, to include the recently developed Entrepreneurial Consulting, Private Equity Investment, Project Management, and Predictive Analytics courses mentioned previously.

In conjunction with the curricular revision, the prior learning goals of the M.B.A. program were revised to reflect functional competencies as covered by the core courses of the curriculum, rather than the very broad integrative learning goals that were currently defined. This will allow the M.B.A. program to more accurately assess student development of practical skills as sought by employers. A summary of the learning goals for implementation with the curriculum follows:

- Graduates will develop and implement leadership systems
- Graduates will design, align, and integrate strategic, tactical, and operational plans
- Graduates will identify customers and design systems for incorporating requirements
- Graduates will design and use information systems to collect and disseminate knowledge
- Graduates will marshal human resource systems to accomplish organizational tasks
- Graduates will create effective operational support services and integrate with suppliers
- Graduates will monitor performance through financial and regulatory compliance

M.B.A. students in the BA 850 capstone courses (n=11) were assessed in Summer 2012 on the primary course deliverable by a **comprehensive external review rubric**, with results as follows:

Learning Outcome / Topic	0 = Incomplete or Ineffectual Design	1 = Solid Design but Ineffectual Integration	2 = Solid Design and Effectual Integration	% 1 or 2
Develop and implement leadership systems throughout an organization	4 36%	2 18%	5 45%	64%
Design, align, and integrate strategic, tactical, and operational plans	3 27%	3 27%	5 45%	73%
Identification of customers; systems for incorporating cust. requirements	1 9%	3 27%	7 64%	91%
Information systems for collecting, analyzing, disseminating knowledge	1 9%	6 55%	4 36%	91%
Marshal human resource systems to accomplish organizational tasks	3 27%	3 27%	5 45%	73%
Operational, support services, supplier systems integration	2 18%	4 36%	5 45%	82%
Financial and compliance processes for monitoring performance	3 27%	4 36%	4 36%	73%

Students were also assessed on a **communication / formatting rubric**, with results as follows:

Learning Outcome / Topic	Unacceptable (0-83)	Acceptable (84-94)	Exemplary (95-100)	% Acc.
Grammar	1 9%	4 36%	6 55%	91%
Punctuation	0 0%	2 18%	9 82%	100%
Professional Presentation	1 9%	4 36%	6 55%	91%
Clarity	3 27%	5 45%	3 27%	73%
Understandable Data Analysis	3 27%	6 55%	2 18%	73%
References	2 18%	5 45%	4 36%	82%

This external review served as a major component of each student's grade in the capstone course required for graduation. No student who failed to meet performance standards on the rubric was eligible for graduation, since a grade of B or higher in the capstone course is required in order to graduate. This pilot implementation of the comprehensive rubric will form the basis for assessment of the revised M.B.A. program curriculum in Fall 2013 as discussed previously.

The external reviewer who conducted the comprehensive assessment in Summer 2012 provided the supplementary qualitative analysis reported below:

“Marketing: Most students did quite well accumulating marketing material to substantiate their assumptions; it is apparent that they know how to use the Internet quite well to research. Some students accumulated too much information, forcing the reader to work through the volume; a little additional refinement would have been helpful, but in all, market research was quite good.

Presentation: Almost every presentation was submitted in generally-acceptable format, including Table of Contents and Appendices. A few had stated assumptions in the body but were not footnoted or referenced; some of those support materials were in the Appendices, but not referenced in the body of the work.

Financial: This is an area that generally was quite weak, although several of the plans had adequate financial information; specifically, there were many opportunities missed where a good incremental analysis would have been helpful. From my perspective, Financial Statements, when presented, fell into one of the following categories:

- o Generally accepted formats (Income Statements, P&Ls, Pro formas)
- o Creatively constructed financial formats
- o No financial analysis of any quality submitted.

Critical Thinking: Perhaps to a lack of domain expertise, there were several plans that lacked important critical questions that should have been raised and addressed.

Risk Analysis: I believe that only one of the plans had a section that was dedicated to risk; it appears as though most students used the SWOT or TOWS matrices as a substitute, although it was clear that some students did not clearly understand how to construct either or both of them.

Cross-Discipline Integration: After reading the plans, my impression was that there was limited understanding of the inter-relationship of Leadership, Planning, Customers, Human Resources, Operations Management and Finance. Most of them appeared to contribute information to the respective sections of their plans, but did not connect the sections to each other.

Grammar and Punctuation: Overall, the plans reflect a ‘Good’ to ‘Very Good’ command of business language communications.”

M.B.A. students are required to submit 2 letters of recommendation with their application to the program. These recommendations include an evaluation by the recommender on 8 items that are relevant to demonstrating the applicant's achievement of communication skills, strong ethical principles, and managerial ability. Results for currently enrolled students are as follows:

Evaluation Item for M.B.A. Applicants	Score
Writing skills	3.69
Speaking skills	3.70
Initiative	3.82
Determination	3.83
Integrity	3.90
Enthusiasm	3.79
Teamwork	3.81
Leadership	3.62

Students are not denied admission based solely on the result of their recommendation letters, but no student is admitted without 2 external evaluations demonstrating their competence in these important areas, and a strong recommendation is sometimes used to justify conditional admission of a student with borderline academic qualifications or professional experience.

Communication skills are a foundational part of the M.B.A. curriculum. MGT 605, Managerial Communication, has served as the program orientation for many years. In the curricular revision being developed, it will be raised to a 700-level "core" course. Communication will continue to be assessed throughout the curriculum, including in the final external review in the capstone. See the previous description of the communication portion of the comprehensive rubric to be applied in the capstone course in Summer 2012 for an outline of communication assessment.

The M.B.A. program places a high value on personal integrity and ethical decision-making and only recruits and admits students who are people of character. Students sign a code of conduct statement upon admission that covers personal and academic integrity. Students admitted to the program consistently rate most highly by their recommenders on the integrity evaluation.

In 2009, a study was conducted of M.B.A. students admitted on a "pilot" basis from 2005-2006 with significant work experience, but relatively low academic performance. The students were found to be as successful as students admitted on the basis of academic performance alone. The M.B.A. program has since modified admissions standards and recruiting practices in order to attract students with greater managerial experience. In Spring 2011, an admissions policy related to the GPA-equivalent value of work experience was modified to require students to have longer work histories to make up for low GPAs. In 2009, 2 or 4 years of work experience would allow as low a GPA of 2.65 or 3.00 for admission; in the new policy, the same experience only allows admission of GPAs of 2.35 or 2.65 and a minimum of 2 years experience is required for conditional admission. It was found the policy would have changed 39% of prior semesters' admission decisions to conditional admission or rejection due to low student work experience.

Informal reports from instructors of upper-level M.B.A. courses, as well as evidence from the presentation slides and handouts reviewed as part of an assessment of presentation skills conducted in Spring 2009, indicated that M.B.A. graduates did not achieve the desired level of writing skills. In the assessment report concerning the outcome of the presentation skills direct assessment (http://www.business.loyno.edu/system/files/MBA_Communication_2009.pdf) the assessment team recommended the following action be taken to improve communication skills:

“Prepare a ‘Communication Expectations’ handbook for students / faculty to clarify and explain the level of performance expected of M.B.A. graduates when preparing business reports or presentations; handbook will include standards and guidelines.”

In Summer 2012, Jerry Goolsby (M.B.A. Director) and Michelle Johnston (Associate Professor of Management, and instructor of the MGT B605 Managerial Communication course) collaborated on a revision and development of a style guide initially created by Goolsby. This document serves the purpose outlined above in 2009 by the assessment team and is nearing final revision for proposal to the College faculty as a comprehensive style guide to be used across the M.B.A. curriculum for clarifying and measuring achievement of style expectations.

The final Mandatory M.B.A. Writing Guide document contains guidelines on the following:

- Style and grammar
- Mechanical and formatting issues
- Presentation of written narrative
- Styles appropriate to common business formats
- Citation and/or reference techniques and formats
- Representative examples of appropriately constructed documents

The document will serve as a standard in defining the expected method for preparing papers for all M.B.A. coursework. It directly addresses the lack of written communication skills identified by professors and business people as a shortcoming of college students.

In Fall 2012, Nate Straight developed a supplementary Statistical Reporting Guide for use in courses such as DECS-B601, Statistics, or the proposed DECS-B700, Business Analytics. This supplementary document contains reporting standards and guidelines for the following:

- Presentation of statistical tables
- Construction of statistical charts and figures
- Reporting of statistical summaries or results in a narrative
- Appropriate levels of detail for managerial / executive-audience reports