

Undergraduate Business Program Assurance of Learning (AoL) **Summary: 2015-2020**

Between 2015 and 2020, the assurance of learning activities in the undergraduate Business program were consistent and significant. In 2019-20, faculty also approved a revised assurance of learning plan. The revised plan added a new learning goal (PLLG7) on critical thinking, and distributed the AoL activities among all required courses on a rotational basis. In the following paragraphs, we highlight the assurance of learning work done for each PLLG.

PLLG1 - Ethics: Ethics learning goal is covered in many places in the curriculum ranging from marketing to human resource management (HRM), organizational behavior and strategic management. In 2019-20, this PLLG was evaluated in the HRM class and students performed well in the three rubric dimensions: (A) Recognition of the Ethical Issue; (B) Analysis of the Ethical Issue; and (C): Discussion and Solution to the Ethical Issue. In fall 2019, faculty implemented two weeks of discussion with questions related to ethical issues such as equity in employment, compensation and hiring.

Plans moving forward: Beginning 2020-21, this goal will be assessed at the sophomore level in the following courses: BUS 272 (Business Law) and ACCT 202 (Managerial Accounting). Faculty are also planning to integrate ethics competence in community-based learning projects related to HRM (junior level).

PLLG2 – Writing and PLLG3 – Oral Presentations: Writing and presentations are pervasive in our curriculum. These two PLLGs have been assessed in the capstone strategic management course (BUS 495); this is typically taken by the students in the senior year. By the time students take BUS 495, they become very experienced in PLLG2 and PLLG3 in other parts of the curriculum, including operations management and organizational behavior. As a result, student performance in these two PLLGs in BUS 495 has been very good. The writing PLLG was also measured in 2019-20 in Organizational Behavior (MGT 349) course. Though students in MGT 349 did well overall, their performance in the “writing mechanics” rubric dimension was not satisfactory. A few reasons for this could be as follows: (i) it is felt that the students are writing more informally; (ii) a previously offered course “Business Writing for International Students” was discontinued. We plan to continue to monitor these two PLLGs more closely and obtain more data from other points in the curriculum before arriving at concrete actions.

Plans moving forward: Given the importance of these learning goals, faculty (in 2019-20) approved to evaluate these two goals every year. However, each year a different course in the following list will be used to evaluate the PLLG: Organizational behavior (junior level), Marketing (junior level), and Strategic Management (senior level).

PLLG4 – Project Management: This PLLG has been assessed three times in the past five years. First, the coverage of project management has been standardized in both F2F and online sections of the information system course in 2015-16. Both F2F and online student performance has been evaluated. The unsatisfactory rates have ranged from 3% to nearly 20%. The current rubric to evaluate students is based on a very technical assignment that requires students to construct network diagrams, critical paths, and project plans. The technical requirements may be contributing to higher unsatisfactory rates for business majors.

Plans moving forward: Faculty approved a plan to evaluate this PLLG in the operations management course (QM 319) beginning 2020-21. This will help obtain student performance on project management from an operations perspective rather than an information systems perspective, which the previous results reported.

PLLG5 – Diversity: Diversity is covered in many places in the curriculum including human resource management and marketing. This PLLG has been assessed two times in the past five years in the marketing course, and once from an equity and ethics perspective in human resource management (see PLLG1 discussion above). In the marketing course, the unsatisfactory rates in recognizing/analyzing diversity issues are in the 25% range, while the unsatisfactory rates in the human resource course were under 10%. Marketing faculty intend to implement a more focused assignment in future which will require students to find examples of promotions in any media that promote stereotyping of Hispanic consumers as well as those that resonate well with minority groups. In human resource management course, faculty implemented two weeks of discussion with questions related to ethical issues such as equity in employment, compensation and hiring.

Plans moving forward: Given the importance of diversity in the business curriculum, faculty (in 2019-20) approved to evaluate this goal every year. Marketing and human resource management courses will be used to collect results on a rotational basis.

PLLG6 – Computer Technology Skills: This PLLG was evaluated twice in the past five years. In 2016-17, this was evaluated in an information systems course for F2F students. Student performance was measured progressively during the semester from a homework to the exam, and the unsatisfactory rates were below 10%. In 2016-17, faculty suggested that this PLLG be evaluated in a different course. In 2019-20, this PLLG was evaluated for both online and F2F students in the business statistics course. Students needed to identify the appropriate statistical technique to analyze a business problem and arrive at a solution. Student performance was exemplary and satisfactory in many rubric dimensions, except in the solution and analysis category. To help facilitate online learning, many changes were implemented in the online version of the course over the past five years: online students were provided with instructor's written notes and Excel formula that specified how to identify problems along with examples and references to the textbook problems. Online students also received extensive procedure sheets. This helped reduce the gap in performance between F2F and online students

Plans moving forward: Faculty plan to add more quiz type statistics practice questions based on business scenarios and create Excel more videos demonstrating statistical techniques. Faculty also approved a plan to evaluate this PLLG in three different courses on rotational basis: Business statistics I (sophomore level), Business statistics II (junior level), and Information systems (junior level).

PLLG7 – Critical Thinking: Over the past few years, faculty noticed that critical thinking learning goal was indirectly measured in our curriculum through other goals (e.g. Ethics goal, Diversity goal, Computer Skills goal). Given the importance of critical thinking, faculty approved to add the critical thinking learning goal as PLLG7 in our assurance of learning plan. This PLLG was also suggested by the CBEC advisory board. This PLLG will be evaluated on a rotational basis in multiple courses: Finance (junior level), Financial Accounting (sophomore level), and Business statistics II (junior level). This learning goal was assessed once in 2019-20 and student performance was very satisfactory. Students were evaluated in three rubric dimensions:

understanding the business problem, analysis, and arriving at a business solution. 80 to 97% of the students are in exemplary or satisfactory categories. This learning goal will be monitored further in future years and faculty plan to introduce more videos emphasizing problem solving techniques, especially for online courses.

Future Plans: As discussed above, a new assurance of learning plan was approved by the faculty in 2019-20 and it will be used beginning 2020-21; this plan includes a new learning goal on critical thinking and will gather assessment results at multiple points in the curriculum ranging from sophomore to senior-level classes. This will provide a more robust and longitudinal student performance results and will help us draw additional insights on student learning.