

FCBE Assurance of Learning “Closing the Loop” Committee Report

IMBA Degree Program

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

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Introduction: Closing the Loop on the IMBA

This report presents a summary of the evaluation conducted by the FCBE Assessment of Learning “Close the Loop” Committee for the IMBA program for the 2015-16 Academic Year and provides recommendations for improvement for IMBA program assessment in future evaluations. The data used in the evaluative process by this committee can be found on the FCBE Assessment website (<http://www.fcbeassessment.net/>). The committee consisted of Philip Babin, George Deitz, Brian Janz, David Kemme, Jason Liu, Ernie Nichols (Chair), Dino Silveri, and Robert Wiggins. The committee was given the charge to:

1. Review the assessment rubrics carefully for the degree program to assure a thorough knowledge of the goals and objectives established by faculty for the degree program.
2. Review data analysis and graphic representation for each objective to determine the degree that reasonable expectations were met. State the reason for your finding. If not met, what is needed to increase the likelihood that the objective will be met during a subsequent assessment.
3. Include specific review recommendations and/or comments for each learning goal for the rubric.
4. After all assessment data for the degree program have been reviewed. The committee should develop a team report in narrative form to summarize findings and conclusions. Be specific and relate conclusions and recommendations to specific findings.

Overview of IMBA Program Assessment

During this assessment cycle, the FCBE increased its standard for performance from 70% of students performing at the “Exemplary” level for each program goal, to 75% of students performing at the Exemplary level. Evaluation metrics under the rubric were Fair, Good and Exemplary. IMBA program rubrics and courses where assessment takes place are can be found at the following link: <http://www.fcbeassessment.net/IMBA.htm>

Overall findings were very favorable as the majority of the IMBA program goals and associated objectives met the target of 75% of the students rated as Exemplary. Only two goals and four objectives failed to achieve the 75% Exemplary target level of performance.

Goals Assessed

FCBE monitors and measures the following six goals for assessment purposes in the IMBA program:

Goal 1: Graduates will be leaders

- 1) Understands how leaders can be positive role models
- 2) Understands how leaders motivate and inspire groups and individuals
- 3) Understands how leaders communicate a vision

Goal 2: Graduates will be technologically competent

- 1) Demonstrates proficiency in the use of business application software packages for financial analysis of data
- 2) Demonstrates proficiency in utilizing the Internet to collect relevant business research data
- 3) Demonstrates proficient use of current communication technologies to gather, organize, transmit, and present information in a manner that enhances businesses and productivity
- 4) Demonstrates proficiency in the use of analytical tools and their applications

Goal 3: Graduates will be knowledgeable of social and ethical issues and trends affecting business.

- 1) Understands how social, ethical and cultural trends affect business
- 2) Understands differences across markets and customers
- 3) Understands how social and ethical issues affect organizational strategies, structures and systems.

Goal 4: Graduate will be knowledgeable in functional areas of business and their integration

- 1) Understands and uses disciplinary knowledge and skills
- 2) Integrates disciplinary expertise across functional areas

Goal 5: Graduates will be critical thinkers and problem solvers

- 1) Proficient in identifying and framing common organizational problems
- 2) Determines the relevant decision criteria for solving the problem
- 3) Given the decision criteria, identifies and analyzes relevant alternatives

Goal 6: Graduates will be sensitive to social, ethical, and multi-cultural issues in the international business environment

- 1) Interpret business issue(s) in social, ethical, and multicultural contexts
- 2) Examine cultural differences between and among IMBA track countries
- 3) Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in multi-cultural environments

Performance Metrics for the 2015-16 Academic Year Assessment

Rubrics were developed and provided to faculty to assess student performance for each goal and their associated objectives. Possible evaluations faculty could make for student performance included “Fair,” which indicated operationally that the student “did not meet expectations, limited accomplishment” (numerical rating of 1); “Good,” which indicated “met expectations, some problems, needs improvement” (numerical rating of 2); and, “Exemplary,” which indicated “met expectations, considerable expertise shown” (numerical rating of 3). The target performance level on each objective is for 75% of students to achieve an Exemplary rating. Performance of less than a 75% Exemplary level on an objective require identification and recommendations of improvements.

2015-16 Performance Results¹

For each of the goals and their associated objectives, evaluations for the 2015-16 cycle were as follows (with shortfalls noted by bracketed comments):

Goal 1: Graduates will be leaders

- 1) Understands how leaders can be positive role models (avg. rating 2.82; 1% Fair, 16% Good, **83% Exemplary**)
- 2) Understands how leaders motivate and inspire groups and individuals (avg. rating 2.69; 2% Fair, 28% Good, **70% Exemplary**) [**Short of goal**]
- 3) Understands how leaders communicate a vision (avg. rating 2.69; 2% Fair, 28% Good, **70% Exemplary**) [**Short of goal**]

Goal 2: Graduates will be technologically competent

- 1) Demonstrates proficiency in the use of business application software packages for financial analysis of data (avg. rating 2.89; 1% Fair, 9% Good, **90% Exemplary**)
- 2) Demonstrates proficiency in utilizing the Internet to collect relevant business research data (avg. rating 2.89; 11% Good, **89% Exemplary**)
- 3) Demonstrates proficient use of current communication technologies to gather, organize, transmit, and present information in a manner that enhances businesses and productivity (avg. rating 2.88; 12% Good, **88% Exemplary**)
- 4) Demonstrates proficiency in the use of analytical tools and their applications (avg. rating 2.81; 2% Fair, 15% Good, **83% Exemplary**)

¹ Goals 1 -5 are shared by the IMBA and MBA programs. A separate assessment for the IMBA program was not conducted for Goals 1 – 5 for this assessment cycle. The results presented for Goals 1 – 5 are based on the 2015 MBA program assessment.

Goal 3: Graduates will be knowledgeable of social and ethical issues and trends affecting business.

- 1) Understands how social, ethical and cultural trends affect business (avg. rating 2.63; 3% Fair, 31% Good, **66% Exemplary**) [**Short of goal**]
- 2) Understands differences across markets and customers (avg. rating 2.93; 7% Good, **93% Exemplary**)
- 3) Understands how social and ethical issues affect organizational strategies, structures and systems (avg. rating 2.63; 3% Fair, 31% Good, **66% Exemplary**) [**Short of goal**]

Goal 4: Graduate will be knowledgeable in functional areas of business and their integration.

- 1) Understands and uses disciplinary knowledge and skills (avg. rating 2.86; 1% Fair, 12% Good, **87% Exemplary**)
- 2) Integrates disciplinary expertise across functional areas (avg. rating 2.96; 4% Good, **96% Exemplary**)

Goal 5: Graduates will be critical thinkers and problem solvers

- 1) Proficient in identifying and framing common organizational problems (avg. rating 2.86; 1% Fair, 12% Good, **87% Exemplary**)
- 2) Determines the relevant decision criteria for solving the problem (avg. rating 2.77; 1% Fair, 21% Good, **78% Exemplary**)
- 3) Given the decision criteria, identifies and analyzes relevant alternatives (avg. rating 2.82; 1% Fair, 16% Good, **83% Exemplary**)

Goal 6: Graduates will be sensitive to social, ethical, and multi-cultural issues in the international business environment

- 1) Interpret business issue(s) in social, ethical, and multicultural contexts (avg. rating 2.80; 20% Good, **80% Exemplary**)
- 2) Examine cultural differences between and among IMBA track countries (avg. rating 2.80; 20% Good, **80% Exemplary**)
- 3) Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in multi-cultural environments (avg. rating 2.80; 20% Good, **80% Exemplary**)

Recommendations for IMBA Goals Requiring Improvement

Goals 1 and 3 require improvement. Recommendations for improvement of these goals are presented in this section.

Goal 1 Recommendations

Goal 1, related to leadership skills, requires improvement, but only in the sense that continuous improvement precepts require that our benchmark be more rigorous in each successive assessment cycle. The 70% Exemplary level returned from the current assessment of Goal 1, Objective 2 (Understands how leaders motivate and inspire groups and individuals) and Objective 3 (Understands how leaders communicate a vision) would have sufficiently met requirements in the last assessment cycle. In the present cycle, they are indicative of the need for minor improvement.

In view of the high 83% Exemplary rating for Objective 1 (Understands how leaders can be positive role models), it appears that students are very clear on what leadership is; they know it when they see it. They just seem to require more training in how to apply leadership, which is largely a matter of communicating organizational goals and motivational aspects of reaching them. As this is a skill best gained in the experience of the quality, it may well be that the classroom is not the best setting for developing applied leadership skills. Yet, to the extent that both applied leadership objectives imply the effective communication of the leader's vision to followers, it seems reasonable that additional training in managerial communication might be effective. To that end, we suggest that the present management class focused on leadership (MGMT 7135) be expanded to include a module on managerial communication as a function of leadership.

Goal 3 Recommendations

Goal 3 addresses the need for graduates to be knowledgeable of social and ethical issues and trends affecting business. Two of the three objectives for Goal 3 failed to meet the target of 75% exemplary. For both Objective 1, "Understands how social, ethical and cultural trends

affect business” and Objective 2 “Understands how social and ethical issues affect organizational strategies, structures and systems” only 66% of the students were rated as exemplary. The committee recommends that content addressing social, ethical and cultural issues is added and/or emphasized throughout the IMBA program curriculum. Increased use of case studies and discussion that address social, ethical and cultural issues as they apply to organizational strategies, structures and systems is recommended throughout the IMBA curriculum. The committee also recommends that the assessment for Goal 3 take place in the course designed to emphasize social, ethical and cultural trends: ACCT 7080 Corporate Governance and Business Ethics.

Recommendations for Improvement of IMBA Program Assessment

In addition to the recommendations provided concerning the IMBA program goals, the committee offers the following recommendations for improvement of the IMBA program assessment process.

IMBA Program Assessment Based on IMBA Program Course Offerings

The IMBA program is distinct from the MBA program. IMBA students receive a separate IMBA degree, not an MBA. However, five of the six goals in this assessment were based on data collected from MBA program classes. Although beyond the scope of this committee’s charge, this raises important questions concerning if the IMBA program is sufficiently unique to warrant a separate degree and a separate assessment? If the IMBA program is a unique program, then the data used for assessment should be collected from IMBA students in IMBA classes. It is further recommended that the next round of IMBA program assessment start in Fall 2017.

Review IMBA Assessment Courses Following MBA Curriculum Changes

A committee of FCBE faculty is currently reviewing the curriculum for the MBA programs. Changes that may be forthcoming as a result of this activity may impact some of the courses that are used for IMBA program assessment. For example, a required core course may become

an elective course. If this course is used for IMBA program assessment, it may no longer attract enough students or be offered frequently enough to provide a meaningful assessment of the overall program. Following the completion of the MBA curriculum review and any changes to the curriculum that are made, all courses used for IMBA assessment should be reviewed to ensure that all are still viable courses for this activity.

Providing Additional Information Concerning Assessment Activity

While not unique to the IMBA program, a shortcoming of the FCBE assessment process is the lack of information concerning how the assessment data for specific goals and associated objectives were collected. In reviewing the rubrics for IMBA goals and associated objectives, it was noted that there are often several opportunities for collecting data. For example, for Goal 1 Objective 1 the direct or indirect measurement may take place in “MGMT 7160 and/or MGMT 7135 using Articles, Exams or Class Presentations.” We recommend that the specific approach used for each assessment should be noted as variability in scores may be a function of measurement approach not student performance.

Recommendations for Improvement of the Assurance of Learning “Closing the Loop” Process¹

Actually Closing the Loop

During the conduct of the 2017 Assessment of Learning Closing the Loop review of the IMBA program, the committee members reviewed the work completed during the 2011 CTL review of the IMBA program. The 2011 report was a comprehensive effort that included a number of recommendations for improvement of the IMBA program and its assessment. The Assessment of Learning website provides two documents

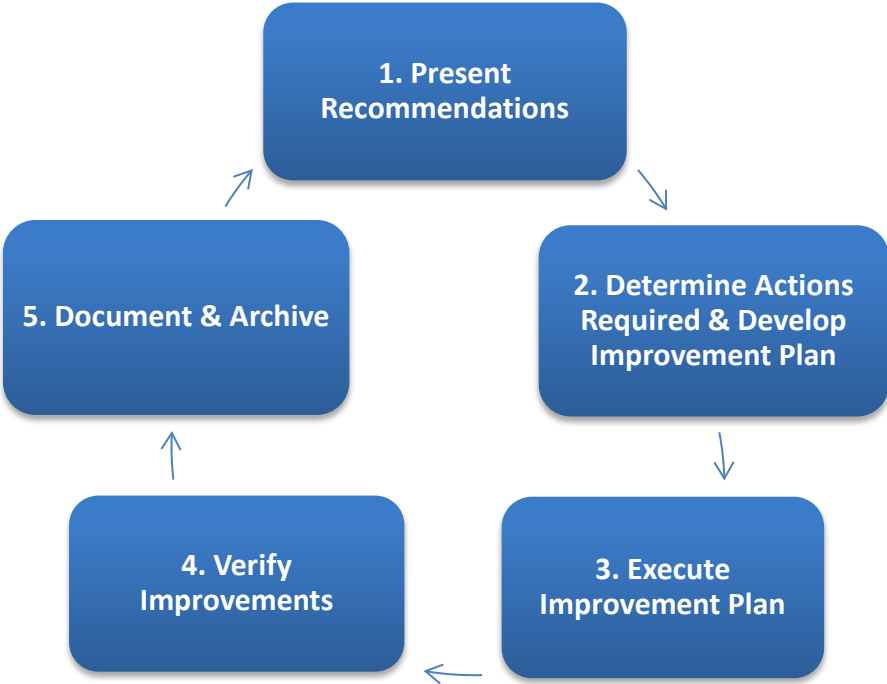
http://www.fcbeassessment.net/IMBA_CTLChecklist.pdf and

http://www.fcbeassessment.net/IMBA_CTLImprovements.pdf that present the specific recommended improvements that were to take place within the IMBA program and parties responsible for the implementation of these improvements. However, there is a missing piece in the Close the Loop process as there is no clear indication that the recommended improvements were in fact made. As the majority of our committee members are faculty members in the IMBA program, some were aware that some of the 2011 recommendations were implemented, but it is not clear that this was the case for all recommendations.

Furthermore, individuals that are not involved in the IMBA program, including AACSB visit team members, would have no indication that recommended improvements did take place. Our recommendation is that the Close the Loop process, specifically, “Step 7 Implement Improvement” be refined to ensure that the recommendations are implemented and any changes that have been made are properly communicated to and understood by all concerned parties. Development of a unified document that captures the implemented activities is also recommended. Recommendations for improvement for the Close the Loop process are presented in the following section.

¹ This section is modified from recommendations that were presented in the 2016 Assessment of Learning “Close the Loop” Report for the EMBA program.

Recommendations for Step 7 Close the Loop: Implement Improvement



Step 7 Close the Loop: Implement Improvement should include the following activities:

1. CTL committee presents recommendations for improvement
2. CTL meets with the Associate Dean for Academics, Program Director, Director of Assessment and appropriate faculty to discuss recommendations, to determine specific actions required to make the improvements and to develop a formal implementation plan
3. Faculty executes implementation plan
4. Associate Dean for Academics, Program Director, Director of Assessment and CTL committee meet with faculty to verify successful implementation of improvements
5. Director of Assessment, CTL committee and faculty document improvements made and archives for future reference

The objective for Step 2 is to ensure that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the recommendations for improvement and the specific actions required to implement the recommendations.

The objective for Step 3 is to establish a formal plan to make the recommended improvements. The plan should identify roles and responsibilities and establish a schedule for completion of the improvements.

In Step 3 the actual improvement recommendations are implemented.

The objective for Step 4 is to make sure that recommendations have in fact been made, i.e., “to really close the loop.”

The objective for Step 5 is to formally document the improvements that have been made and to archive the document for future reference.

Step 7 Documentation

A single document should be used to capture Step 7 activities. An example of this document is presented below.

Step 7 Implement Improvement Document - Example

Goal	Recommendation	Action	Responsible Parties	Planned Completion Date	Improvement	Verified Date
1	Increase use of case studies in IMBA classes.	IMBA faculty should incorporate case analysis, discussion and presentation where appropriate.	Drs. X , Y & Z	8/15/17	Dr. X has added 4 cases to BIT XXXX course. Dr. Y has added 6 cases to MKTG XXXX. Dr. Z has added 4 cases to SCMS XXXX.	7/30/17 8/5/17 8/15/17
2						
3						
4						
5						