

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program: Part-time MBA Program

Department:

College/School: Chaifetz School of Business

Date: AY20-21 (prepared Sept/Oct 2021)

Primary Assessment Contact: Dr. Brett Boyle, Program Director

1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Learning Outcomes 1 & 4 (LO1 & LO4, are assessed annually in MGT6006 – the capstone PMBA course)

Other Learning Outcomes are assessed on a rotating schedule. Our Global Perspectives outcome was scheduled to be assessed during AY20-21, but COVID modifications created difficulty in using our preferred assignment.

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

LO 1: Knowledge of key business function was assessed using an CSB-designed exit exam administered during MGT6006. The 80-question exam is designed to cover 5 areas of foundational business knowledge (Finance, ITM, International Business, Management, and Marketing) taught across 8 courses in the PMBA program. Questions are developed by groups of faculty who teach in those courses.

LO 4: Written communication skills are assessed via projects that are performed for corporate clients (MGT 6006)

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.

LO1. Multiple choice exam questions were scored.

LO4. Course instructor grades the quality of the written deliverable. Clients (project sites) provide feedback on the professional quality of the written report and presentation.

All results are computed by course instructors, and raw data or summary data are submitted to Program Director.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.

The main findings from the current assessment data are:

LO1. In previous years, results from the exit exam have been poor. For instance, in 2019, a majority of

students met or exceeded expectations in only two content areas (MGT6003, ITM6000). In all other areas, the majority of students fell into the Needs Improvement Category.

For SP21, we found that the results improved dramatically over previous iterations (see pages following report). Overall, 9 of the 13 students (69%) scored over 70% correct on the exam, with 4 individuals achieving scores in the 80s, and one individual achieving a score of 90. In terms of subsection scores, two sections, Finance and Marketing, had average scores of 65% and 68% respectively, while the remaining 6 sections all exceeded 70%. Although the Finance and Marketing scores were below our desired threshold, these scores represent a marked improvement over previous years in which less than twenty percent of our students reached proficiency on these areas.

LO4. Overall, students generated high-quality written responses. Scores on the attributes of professionalism and content exceeded expectations (only 1 student demonstrated a need for improvement in these two areas). For the remaining three attributes (structure, sources/evidence, grammar/punctuation/spelling), between 80% and 88% of students met or exceeded expectations.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

Based on the current round of assessment data, we are planning to do the following.

Our revised approach to prepare students for the final knowledge assessment exam showed promising results. There was a clear improvement in the performance of students who were provided with the study guide prior to taking the exam. As noted before, we speculated that poor performance on the exit exam was potentially due to timing and lack of strict sequencing in the PMBA program. In particular, it is possible that a student could be taking a tested content area course concurrently with the timing of the exit exam, and thus not have had exposure to all of the content; alternately, it is possible for a student to have successfully completed a course and not take the exit exam for another 7 – 10 semesters, thus requiring significant content recall over a long period of time.

Based on our discussions of these results, we modified the way the exam was presented to students, and also provided study materials for them to prepare for the exam and refresh content that they may have not seen for several semesters.

Overall, we have not made significant modifications in our courses to address written communication. Our students appear to have strong skills in this area as they prepare to leave our program. Teaching writing would be a challenge for many of our instructors to find time to add this content to their courses, and they may not consider themselves to be experts in writing (but do feel competent in assessing its quality). Should we notice weakness in this area going forward, we may have to consider workshops or other outside/sourced instruction in writing proficiency.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

(1) The revised approach to preparation for the exit exam, along with significant improvement in scores, is one of the clearest indications of closing the loop from previous assessment cycles.

There are also discussions underway regarding implementing testing at the conclusion of each particular content area to alleviate the time lag problem identified earlier. For the time being, we are holding off on such changes as we gather additional semesters’ worth of data on the exit exam in its new format.

(2) A revision to the program curriculum is being considered. The new model will consist of stackable certificates resulting in an MBA degree after completing 3 certificates. Each certificate will have formal learning goals and an assessment plan to capture learning in that particular content area. The program

will still culminate in the MGT6006 capstone, so we believe the exit exam will remain an important part of assessment to ensure that students are gaining a common foundational understanding of business, regardless of their specialized certificate choices.

- (3) Prior to the pandemic, we were in the process of making more courses available online in order to offer more flexible options for working adults. Now that the pandemic forced the creation of online content for the majority of our PMBA courses, we will continue to expand our online offerings and make these available under normal circumstances such that a distance-delivered SLU PMBA is a possibility. To strengthen this approach, SLU has implemented a Distance Learning Policy to assure that the quality of remote-learning courses remains rigorous and meets strict design standards. This policy will go into effect in 2021. Many of our faculty have participate in the online teaching seminars offered by the Reinert Center

IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.