

**Form 201BC: Assessment Report Form for Instructional Programs
2009– 2010 Academic Year**

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Outcomes

1. Describe and use accounting equation, principles and concepts.
2. Identify advantages and disadvantages of corporate and non-corporate form of business including major economic, legal, political, social and cultural forces and their influences.
3. Identify various rulemaking bodies and codes of conduct which guides accounting professionals in both identifying and resolving ethical issues.
4. Analyze, prepare and discuss papers on current accounting issues.
5. Analyze, compile and report on the accounting cycle.
6. Analyze and identify accounting internal controls and management controls including limitations of both.
7. Analyze and prepare journals, ledgers and basic financial statements.
8. Analyze, compile and prepare bank reconciliation.
9. Prepare all assignments including homework and accounting projects using computer software.

Method of Assessment

Direct Assessment-

a) Comprehensive Exam: This is an examination administered to students majoring in accounting. The purpose of the instrument is to measure student performance in financial accounting theory and practice. The instrument was administered to 30 students in Accounting 3213 (Intermediate Accounting I class). The instrument had a dual purpose in both measuring student performance for assessment and feedback assessment to students.

b) Writing sample: This is a research paper that is administered in an upper-level course to measure student writing and research ability. The purpose of the instrument is to measure student performance in financial accounting and its relevance to current issues. In addition, the paper will identify various rulemaking bodies and codes of conduct which guide accounting professionals in both identifying and resolving ethical issues. The instrument was administered to 23 students in Accounting 3319 (Governmental & Non-Profit Accounting class).

Indirect Assessment- Senior Exit Questionnaire was emailed to all graduating accounting seniors. The instrument was submitted to all graduating accounting seniors, with 9 students responding. The purpose of the instrument is to obtain a measure of student satisfaction as it relates to various aspects of the accounting curriculum. In addition, this instrument provides input on the accounting program's effectiveness in problem solving, communication skills, and decision making,

Assessment Findings and Interpretations/Conclusion:

Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam was created to assess student understanding of basic financial accounting theory and practice. Overall, the average student scored 38 out of a possible 50 (76.7%) with a standard deviation of 15.2%. 22 out of 30 students scored 70% or higher (73%). When students who later dropped the course were removed from the population the standard deviation dropped significantly supporting our confidence that the average accounting student from the population of students would score a 70% on the exam suggesting that students are meeting a minimum accepted level of mastery in these subjects. However, to better assess student comprehension we plan to embed questions all across every accounting course which will better support our findings.

What is of great significance is the good performance in the area of financial accounting theory which is the foundation of accounting learning used in subsequent classes. Students did exhibit challenges in accounting practice (problem solving). This finding is corroborated by the poor performance in upper division classes (Advanced Accounting and Intermediate Accounting II).

Writing Sample

The writing sample was a research paper created to assess student writing and research ability. The research papers of 23 students enrolled in the ACC 3319 were evaluated using the rubric outlined in the assessment plan. The results of the writing sample are as follows:

Grade	Number
A	0
B	9
C	14
D	0
F	0

Since the targeted level of performance was a minimum grade of B by the average student, our students are underperforming in the area of written communication since 14 of 23 received a grade of "C". Students who perform at the C level demonstrate good use of research and study skills. Their papers demonstrate good knowledge of financial accounting and its relevance to current issues. However, to continually improve student written communication, it is recommended the Department require a research paper/project in all applicable courses.

Senior Exit Questionnaire

For this academic year, nine students completed the senior exit questionnaires. The average ratings for this year indicate high overall satisfaction with the program.

Students indicated excellent ratings of their understanding of business communications (4.44/5.0), and decision-making/leadership skills (4.11/5.0). Students indicated good ratings of their understanding of problem solving (3.89/5.0) and being well prepared for a career in accounting (3.44/5.0). Students looked favorable at referring students to CSU with a rating of (3.67/5.0).

Students in the major perceived their understanding of financial accounting, as good overall. Their understanding of advanced accounting was rated as weakest. In the comment section, a student noted “having the same professor over and over again. Also the professors need to stick to the textbook and test only the textbook’s concepts.” A student commented that “the classes in Intermediate Accounting II and Advanced Accounting need to cover the most important concepts at a slow pace and need to go by the book. The basis for this is that in the classroom we learned a totally different method than what was stated in the book and this caused confusion and frustration among the students.”

The results of the senior exit questionnaire are very encouraging and corroborate the conclusion that students have a good fundamental basis to build upon but have difficulty with higher level accounting courses including problem solving in accounting practice. Graduating seniors feel their understanding of business communications and decision-making/leadership skills is good. Overall, the graduating seniors feel well prepared for a career in accounting. In addition, most would likely refer a loved one to the Program.

Decision Making Using Findings

The instrument used in the assessment process identified the following issues:

- Review all accounting courses for embedding questions in course material to get better coverage and depth in assessing student comprehension.
- Increase use of accounting practice problems requiring students to problem solve.
- Integrate clicker technology in all accounting courses starting with Introduction to Managerial Accounting (Acct 2111) to engage accounting students continuously during their accounting career.
- To improve student writing skills require a research paper/project in all applicable courses.
- Construct a master course outline for Intermediate Accounting II and Advanced Accounting. This course outline will specify the breadth and depth of material to be covered in each course. It will provide professors with necessary components to be included in their course syllabi. Additionally, each faculty member will be provided with a copy of the assessment plan to inform them of assessment measures and rubrics.
- Rotate professors among classes to allow students different teaching methods.

- Continue to encourage faculty who teach accounting courses to include assignments that involve the use of computer technology.
- There was a decrease in the number of graduating students who completed the senior exit survey in AY0809 (15) over AY0910 (9), the department must strive for greater compliance. Students must be required to submit and collect their graduation applications from the department office personnel. Currently, some students go directly to an advisor who reviews their applications on the spot, rather than inform the students of the correct procedure. This practice contributes to the low percentages we have experienced in the department.
- The department should implement the assessment plan as it is currently written and also printed in the 2008-2010 undergraduate catalog; or review and revise the plan and ensure that future catalogs correctly reflect the plan.

Demonstrating Improved Student Learning

RETENTION BY MAJOR						
ONE YEAR RETENTION FOR ALL NEW FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME FRESHMEN BY MAJOR						
SIX YEAR TREND						
ENTERING COHORTS 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 *						
		Total at Entry	Results One-Year-After Following Entry			
			Enrolled 2nd Yr		Did not Enroll 2nd Yr	
			N	%	N	%
ACCOUNTING	2003	21	13	61.9	8	38.1
	2004	20	9	45	11	55
	2005	16	8	50	8	50
	2006	16	11	68.75	5	31.25
	2007	27	16	59.26	11	40.74
	2008	15	11	73.33	4	26.67

The retention rates as reported above reflect for the five year period ending in 2008 a continual increase in the retention rate (45% to 73.33%). The accounting department is continually attempting to keep students in school as shown by the increasing retention rate. Currently, all students' grades are reviewed every four weeks and any student with poor performance is identified for intervention before they fall too far behind.

GRADUATION BY MAJOR								
SIX YEAR GRADUATION FOR ALL NEW								
FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME FRESHMEN BY MAJOR								
FOUR YEAR TREND								
ENTERING COHORTS 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 *								
		Total at Entry	Results After Six Years Following Entry					
			Graduated Within 6 Yrs		Continued to Enroll		Left for More Than 1 Yr	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
ACCOUNTING	2000 TO 2006	21	2	9.5	4	19	15	71.4
	2001 TO 2007	23	8	34.8	0	0	15	65.2
	2002 TO 2008	19	2	10.5	2	10.5	15	78.9
	2003 TO 2009	21	4	19	0	0	17	81

The graduation rates as reported above are poor. Of the last three graduation periods ending 2008, the percentage went from 34.8% to 19%. While these graduation rates appear to be low, there is an explanation on why this has occurred. Since the 150 hour requirement to sit for the CPA exam, many students are transferring out of the program due to the significant amount of work needed to finish the program. During the end of the 2009 academic year, there were a total of twelve students that graduated from the accounting program. All of the students who completed the senior exit questionnaire stated their intent to enroll in graduate school to complete the 150 hour requirement.

The accounting program is a very demanding field of study. As such, the recommendations suggested should both have a positive impact on retention and graduation rates of incoming freshmen and transfer students by making them more job-ready, better decision-makers, and better leaders

Effectiveness of Program Assessment

The assessment coordinator in collaboration with Department Chair will research the possibility of utilizing a standard assessment instrument to its students. This will allow benchmarking to be accomplished with other peer and model institutions. As it stands, we are not sure that our students are underperforming when compared to other state and national schools since the assessment instrument was developed in-house and the results are not comparable to that of other institutions.

Resources Needed

If a standardized assessment instrument is utilized, this will require additional monetary resources. The assessment coordinator will research the costs and benefits of doing so.

Publicizing Student Learning

At this time our assessment results are not publicized. To my knowledge, no discussion about what data or results will be used, and the means of internal and external publication has taken place within the department or the college.

Accomplishments and Challenges

Our accounting majors continue to represent the University well at NABA conferences/workshops and SIFE competitions. Additionally, because of the performance of recent accounting graduates, the Big Four CPA firms and several Fortune 500 companies are interviewing on campus for internships and career positions.

One of our greatest challenges is how to motivate more of our graduates to sit for and pass the CPA exam. Even prior to the 150 hour requirement, a very low percentage of our graduates actually sat for the exam and an even smaller percentage were successful. Passing the CPA exam is very often one of the criteria used to assess an accounting program. Today, with the 150 hour requirement it is a more difficult task, but one that we address by encouraging accounting majors to select minors and/or going onto graduate schools. The College of Business is seeking approval for graduate programs – Master of Business Administration and Master of Accounting.

At this time there is no one assigned to coordinate the assessment efforts of the College as a whole. To ensure a cohesive and effective assessment plan, there must be greater communication among the COB assessment coordinators, the COB administrators and the Department Curriculum Committees – at the departmental and college levels.