



**School of Business and Economics
Indiana University South Bend**

Third year Assessment Report to the Campus Assessment Committee

Undergraduate Business Program

By:

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May 5, 2008

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Third Year Assessment Report
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I. Introduction

Over the last three years, the School of Business and Economics has reviewed its mission statement, revised it, and approved the new mission statement. The School has developed new learning goals for the undergraduate business program and implemented a number of assessment instruments such as a comprehensive posttest, alumni survey, graduating students' focus group sessions, and concept inventory, and collected feedback data from graduating students, alumni and faculty. An analysis of the feedback data has confirmed the quality of our business program and identified a number of areas for continuous improvement. The School's Planning and Assessment Committee has made a number recommendations for continuous improvement.

II. Educational Goals for Undergraduate Business Program (Revised and Approved by faculty: October 28, 2005, School of Business and Economics Faculty Meeting)

1. Basis for Learning Goals

IU South Bend strategic documents and mission statement, SBE mission statement, and AACSB standards, are driving the learning goals and assessment plans for each program in the SBE including the Undergraduate Business Program as shown in figure 1. Indiana University South Bend is committed "to excellence in teaching, learning, research, and creative activity; to strong liberal arts and science programs and professional disciplines; ...to the economic development of its region and state, Indiana University South Bend meets the changing educational and research needs of the community and serves as a vibrant cultural resource."

<http://www.chancellor.iusb.edu/strategic-plan.pdf>. The School of Business and Economics (SBE) mission states that the School "...offers high-quality educational programs that provide business knowledge, skills, and capabilities that enable our diverse student body to succeed in a dynamic environment..." <http://www.iusb.edu/~buse/mission.shtml>. AACSB standards for Assurance of Learning (AOL) support two principles which are the foundation of AACSB accreditation, accountability and continuous improvement. In terms of accountability, "Measures of learning can assure external constituents such as potential students, trustees, public officials, supporters, and accreditors, that the organization meets its goals" (AACSB 2008, p.59). In terms of continuous improvement, "... By measuring learning the school can evaluate its students' success at achieving learning goals, can use the measures to plan improvement efforts, and (depending on the type of measures) can provide feedback and guidance for individual students" (AACSB 2008, p.59).

AACSB Standard 15 (Management of Curricula) states: *The school uses a well documented, systematic process to develop, monitor, evaluate and revise the substance and delivery of the curricula of degree programs and to assess the impact of the curricula on learning.*

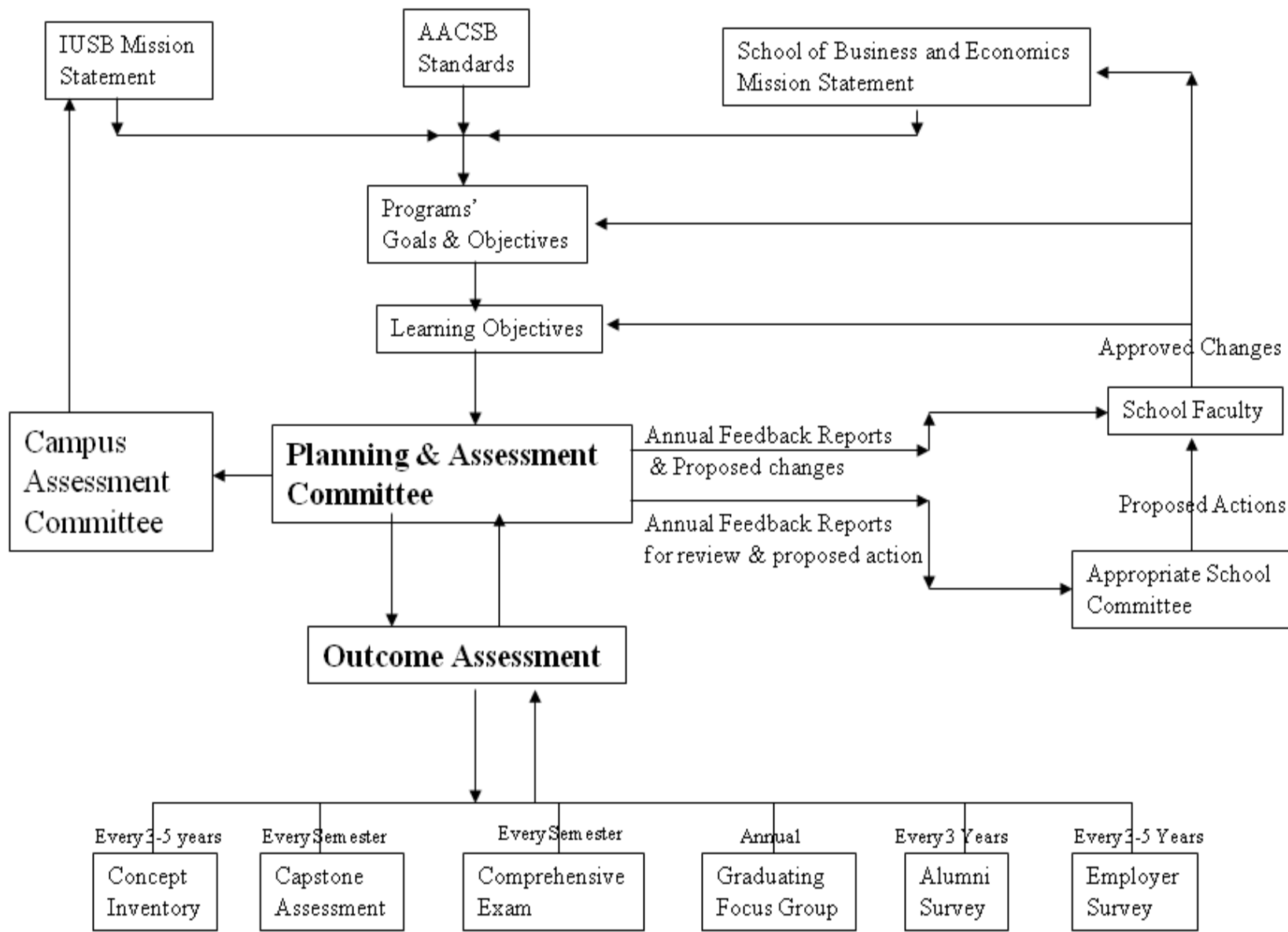
Standard 16 (Bachelor's or undergraduate level degree: Knowledge and skills) states:

...Adapting expectations to the school's mission and cultural circumstances, the school specifies learning goals and demonstrates achievement of learning goals for key general, management-specific, and/or appropriate discipline-specific knowledge and skills that its students achieve in each undergraduate degree program.

These standards require that the SBE specify learning goals and demonstrate achievement of these goals for two separate kinds of learning: (1) **general** knowledge and skills, and (2) **management-specific** knowledge and skills that students achieve in each undergraduate business degree program. General knowledge and skills, "... relate to knowledge and abilities that graduates will carry with them into their careers. Such learning areas as communications abilities, problem solving abilities, ethical reasoning skills, and language abilities are the types of general knowledge and abilities that school might define as part of these goals". Management-specific learning goals on the other hand, "...relate to expectations for learning accomplishment in areas that directly relate to management tasks and forms the business portion of degree requirements. Such areas include traditional learning disciplines such as accounting, management science, marketing, human resources, and operations management, and, depending on how the school defines its mission, might include such management-specific but non-traditional areas as corporate anthropology, change management, or others. In developing learning goals, the school should give careful attention to both the general and the management-specific learning goals.

http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/process/documents/AACSB_STANDARDS_Revised_Jan08.pdf

Figure 1. Continuous Improvement Processes and Outcome Assessment
 School of Business and Economics, Indiana University South Bend



2. Learning Goals

Students, who complete the undergraduate business program at IUSB, will demonstrate knowledge and skills in their area of concentration, and in the following areas:

1. written and oral communication;
2. leadership and multicultural diversity;
3. analytic reasoning, statistical analysis and management science, and reflective thinking to support organizational decision making;
4. using information technologies and understanding their impacts on organizations, economies, and management;
5. ethical reasoning, and social and legal responsibilities in organizations and society;
6. financial theories, analysis and accounting, and understanding domestic and global economic environments of organizations;
7. creating value through integrated production, marketing, and distribution of goods, services, and information;
8. team and individual dynamics in organizations.

Learning Goals and Assessment Methods

Learning Goals:	Comprehensive Exam	Capstone Assessment	Pre-business Concept Assessment	Graduating Focus Group	Alumni Survey	Employer Survey
1. Written and oral communication;		DM	DM	IM	IM	IM
2. Reflective thinking and understanding multicultural diversity;		DM		IM	IM	IM
3. Analytic reasoning, statistical analysis and management science, and leadership to support organizational decision making;	DM	DM	DM	IM	IM	IM
4. Using information technologies and understanding their impacts on organizations, economies, and management;	DM	DM	DM	IM	IM	IM
5. Ethical reasoning, and social and legal responsibilities in organizations and society;		DM	DM	IM	IM	IM
6. Financial theories, analysis and reporting, and understanding domestic and global economic environments of organizations;	DM	DM	DM	IM	IM	IM
7. Creating value through integrated production, marketing, and distribution of goods, services, and information;	DM	DM		IM	IM	IM
8. Group and individual dynamics in organizations.	DM	DM	DM	IM	IM	IM

(**DM** denotes the direct measure for assessment of learning goals, and **IM** represents indirect measure for assessment of learning goals)

III. The Assessment Instruments, Analysis of Assessment Data, and Identification of Areas for Improvements

The faculty in the School of Business and Economics has defined six instruments for assessment of the Undergraduate Business Program:

1. **Comprehensive Post-Test**, direct assessment measure
2. **Capstone Course**, direct assessment measure
3. **Concept Inventory**, direct assessment measure
4. **Exit Interview Sessions**, indirect assessment measure
5. **Alumni Survey**, indirect assessment measure and
6. **Employers Focus Groups / Surveys** indirect assessment measure.

These instruments have been designed to assess the undergraduate business program to support continuous improvement, in meeting the University and the School of Business and Economics Mission Statements, and in supporting the maintenance of accreditation of SBE programs by AACSB International - The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Therefore, as figure 1 shows, the Mission Statements (both Campus-wide and School) and AACSB standards drive this assessment program. The following describes the purpose of these instruments as well as an analysis of assessment data.

1. Comprehensive Post-Test

To maintain consistency in the assessment of our programs, the School has adopted the ETS Business Field Test as a comprehensive post-test and has administered this examination from the Education Testing Service (ETS) on a regular basis. This test has become a part of graduation requirements. Therefore, students are required to take this comprehensive post-test at the end of their senior year and have to successfully pass the post-test in order to graduate. The following is the summary of results from ETS for our graduating students when compared with other business programs nationally during the last three years:

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND School of Business & Economics Interdepartmental Communication

Summary results of Undergraduate ETS Performance

Date	Number of Students	National Mean B/E Mean Score	B/E Performance Position	
2005 Spring	34	151.6	162.7	Top 10%
2005 Summer	26	151.6	162.0	Top 10%
2005 Fall	27	151.6	162.0	Top 15%
2006 Spring	49	151.5	159.2	Top 20%
2006 Summer	19	151.5	157.0	Top 25%
2006 Fall	23	160.5	151.2	Top 15%
2007 Spring	41	152.5	166	Top 5%
2007 Summer	20	152.5	166	Top 5%
2007 Fall	31	152.5	163	Top 10%

The detailed compiled results from ETS over the last three years are presented in appendix 1. According to these summary results our undergraduate business students scored at the top 5% to 25% of participating business programs nationally. In addition, students' performances in various business disciplines were in the same order

when compared with other business programs in the country participating in this test. We consider this test as an external assessment measure of student learning in the core business curriculum and as a reflection of the overall quality of our programs.

2. Capstone Course Experience

All students are required to take a capstone course, J401, Administrative Policy, during their last year of course work. The instructor of the course requires students to demonstrate knowledge of concepts learned from business core courses. The course permits direct measurement of students' learning of the program's concepts and identification of areas for improvement. The instructors who teach this course report regularly to the School's Planning and Assessment Committee about the level of preparedness exhibited by students.

From the capstone experience assessment, the instructor found that written communication skills are about average, although there are still a few who have difficulty writing simple one page reports. Oral communication skills have improved quite a bit over the years. Students' knowledge and skills in Team and Individual Dynamics of Organizations have improved. Their knowledge and skills in Analytic Reasoning, Statistical Analysis, Management Science and Reflective Thinking are very good. Students display enormous interest in Ethical Reasoning, and Social and Legal Responsibilities in Organizations and Society. They are very much aware of the hot button issues in these areas – e.g., high executive pay, ethical lapses in some well known firms. For example, students often are able to appreciate the arguments offered by free market proponents in defense of the present system of executive pay in the US (although they may not necessarily agree with them) when they recognize how business systems—including executive compensation-- differ in other countries such as Japan and Germany and also know that the economies in these countries are not doing as well as ours (evidence held out by free market proponents for why the present system here is working is that the US economy as a whole is doing very well relative to Japan and Germany where executive compensation systems are different and executive pay overall is much lower). The instructor found that students over time have a much better skill level in using information technologies for information searches, and for putting together presentations.

With respect to learning goal 7 (knowledge and skills in Creating Value through Integrated Production, Marketing, and Distribution of Goods, Services and Information) it is the instructor's assessment that most students do not have an adequate understanding of this larger picture either because they never had instruction in this area (they may not have taken W100, or encountered this in other courses), or because there are few if any courses at the 200 and 300 level that address and reinforce the view of businesses as a whole (as opposed to the functional specialties).

Student knowledge in the areas of Financial Theories, Analysis and Accounting, and Economic Environments of Organizations (learning goal 8) is below what one may expect from someone who has spent 4 or 5 years of their life studying business. Most students could not confidently reproduce the basic format/structure of income statements (the order of items and the items themselves) and balance sheets. Students also have trouble recalling and using basic models and frameworks used to arrive at cost of capital (e.g., most students could not say how cost of capital can be estimated or how risk "beta" relates to estimating the cost of equity). With respect to economics, students have trouble articulating with confidence how macroeconomic trends affect businesses, although they were aware of relevant concepts such as inflation, unemployment rates and interest rates. The entire report is attached as appendix 2.

3. Concept Inventory

The concept inventory seeks to assess the links between business and economics core courses and the pre-business core as well as some of the general education courses. Specifically, faculty members who teach business core courses report on their coverage of major concepts and program learning goals as well as evaluating their students' mastery of the concepts and skills studied in prerequisite courses such as written and oral communication, mathematics, accounting, business law, computing, economics, and statistics. The concept inventory form for the capstone course is presented in Appendix 6.

The School's Planning and Assessment Committee implemented the instrument this academic year and found some inconsistency among various business core courses and their instructors with respect to the level of mastery or knowledge gained by students in prerequisite courses. For example, while there was consistency in assessing students' knowledge in some accounting concepts/financial statements and written communication as inadequate, there was no consistency in their assessment of students' math, statistics, economics, and statistical knowledge and skills. The Committee is currently working on this issue and trying to resolve this inconsistency before discussing other possible action steps.

4. Focus Group Interview Sessions

Small group discussions with new graduates of the undergraduate business program are conducted annually. At the end of every academic year, several 2-hour sessions in South Bend and Elkhart are scheduled during the final exam and commencement weeks to assure the maximum number of participants. The sessions are conducted by a facilitator from outside the School. The Assessment Committee reports to the faculty any points of interest, and suggests appropriate responses to the issues raised by students. This instrument has proved to be valuable in identifying our strengths and weaknesses. A copy of the form for analysis of focus group interview sessions is provided in Appendix 4.

Over that last three years, we arranged two 2-hour sessions in South Bend for graduating students with a facilitator (from UCET) conducting the sessions. The Facilitator met with the Assessment Committee to report the outcomes and for debriefing. The transcripts were reviewed and the strengths and weaknesses have been identified by the School Assessment Committee for appropriate action. Over the last three years, we have highlighted the strengths as well as the areas for improvement in the undergraduate business program as expressed by participating students. For example, the Committee found that the strengths (Program Value and Instructors) and the areas of weakness (career services and elective availability) that were identified in the Alumni survey were corroborated in the focus group interviews of graduating students.

5. Alumni Survey

Every 3 years, our graduates for the preceding 3 years are asked to respond to structured and unstructured questions. The results are compiled and reported to the SBE Assessment Committee and faculty. The survey provides valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of our program. The School Planning and Assessment Committee conducted an alumni survey in spring 2006. We asked alumni to respond to a series of structured questions and to provide some unstructured comments. A copy of the results of the Alumni Survey is provided in Appendix 3. The Committee reviewed the compiled responses and reported them to the faculty. The survey provided valuable information in identifying issues that our undergraduates regarded as handled well, and others where they thought the School can improve. The survey was conducted among graduate and undergraduate alumni in Business and Economics and the questions were formulated in general terms to address the learning goals. The compiled results are included in appendix 3. There were a number of questions

(questions 29 to 33) that asked alumni to indicate his/her degree program. About 66.25% of alumni were Undergraduates, 25.32% were MBAs, and the rest were from other programs.

The Committee found from this survey, that “Program Value” (measured by rigor, quality, value, currency of materials, and current technology, flexible schedule, and cost) and “Instructors” (measured by knowledge, approachability, supportiveness, helpfulness, and quality) are our two greatest strengths. Splitting the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses shows details consistent with the overall pattern of positive perceptions among our alumni. Most dramatic are the subtotals for the ‘Instructor Knowledge’ item, where more alumni chose ‘Strongly Agree’ than ‘Agree’! Subtotals for the ‘Value’ and ‘Instructors’ items show ratios of ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Agree’ in the range of 1:1 to 1:2. (By contrast, the ‘Grades Accurately Reflect Learning’ and ‘Prerequisite Courses Helpful for Later Courses’ items had subtotal ratios closer to 1:3.3, indicating lukewarm support.)

6. Employers Focus Groups / Surveys

The Assessment Committee conducts focus groups / surveys with employers every 3-5 years. These assess characteristics that employers seek when hiring and the extent to which our graduates meet those requirements. These assessments identify curricular issues for us to address, as well as permit us to collect feedback about our graduates, establish/develop relationships with area employers, cultivate internships and placements for our students, and provide opportunities to promote our programs.

The Planning and Assessment Committee has spent significant time this year and developed a comprehensive survey for collecting feedback from the employers of our graduates. We have found a list of employers and we are currently working on conducting this employer’s survey. The new employer survey form, consistent with the learning goals, is presented in Appendix 5.

IV. Planning & Assessment Committee’s recommendation for improvement

The Committee believes it is vital for School to leverage its strengths as well as to remedy its weaknesses. The following are the Planning and Assessment Committee’s recommendations to improve the business school’s teaching and curriculum, and students’ technical and auxiliary skills. The first two recommendations address strengths and the next three address areas for improvement.

#1 To leverage strong perceptions among alumni and graduating students of Program Value, we suggest developing and implementing *marketing and referral* programs. Sending out flyers and newsletters to high school students and their parents is a cost-effective strategy. We could also offer cost-effective rewards, such as IUSB Bookstore gift cards, Dining Services cards (maybe Starbucks cards), Transpo passes, or tuition credits to SBE students and alumni who refer others to become new students in our programs. This suggestion will use word of mouth and print advertising about Program Value and Instructors to build enrollment.

#2 To leverage strong perceptions among alumni and graduating students of our Instructors, we suggest that we develop workshops, panels, and/or lectures for our alumni, community, and especially prospective students. Through careful design and staffing, we can show off the Knowledge, Up-to-date Materials, Quality Teaching, and other impressive characteristics of our Instructors (including the relevance of our associate faculty).

#3 To remedy the perceived weakness of Career Services will require exploring the surprisingly even distribution of opinions among our recent alumni: roughly 40% have no opinion, 35% have

negative opinions, and 25% have positive opinions of Career Services. We should examine additional data in more detail to understand the issues. We also need to explore the impact of changes that have already taken place in the Career Services area. We (the faculty) should work with Jeff Jackson and his staff to better engage our diverse student body (some of whom seek degrees to get jobs, some whom seek degrees to keep jobs or move up, and most of whom don't think about such questions until they finish the degree); to raise student awareness and perceptions; to provide students with SBE- and degree-relevant (i.e., professional business) job opportunities; and to promote our programs and students in larger companies/firms. (That our graduating students are consequently anxious about career matters is consistent with their relatively extreme negative responses.) It would be wise to bring together students, alumni, faculty members, and community employers, to create a networking opportunity for students seeking jobs.

#4 To remedy the perceived weakness of Elective Availability will also require some additional investigation. The negative responses may reflect some students who wanted more electives offered in a given term or year as well as other students who wanted fewer required courses and more elective courses in their degree programs. Some of the dissatisfaction can be addressed by improving the articulation among required and prerequisite courses. Nonetheless, we must review the curricula for our programs periodically and create flexibility, such as more electives, as well as evening and online classes.

#5 Although Program Value and Instructors have been rated highly overall, both Alumni Survey and Focus Group data suggest a need for improvement in several areas: teaching pedagogy, curriculum, and student technical and auxiliary skills. Specifically, quantitative data and narrative comments indicate that some full time faculty members: (a) do not use enough real-world applications in their teaching, (b) mainly lecture or rely solely on textbooks, (c) are not available during office hours or hold only daytime hours. They also indicate that the curricula for our programs: (a) do not allow for concentration, (b) do not contain the right courses and materials, (c) are thin in terms of electives, and (d) do not adequately address development of certain technical and auxiliary skills.

To improve the value and relevance of our teaching and programs, the School needs to periodically assess its teaching pedagogies, the appropriateness of programs and courses, and the wisdom of prerequisites and co-requisites. The Committee has made the following suggestions:

- a) Create better incentives and opportunities for faculty to incorporate real-world applications and relevant technologies into their classes, and develop skills in using multiple pedagogies. Moreover, improve on direct links with community organizations and classroom/student experiences, such as internships, projects, etc.
- b) Encourage faculty to make themselves available at times convenient to students and in line with the IU faculty handbook.
- c) Reevaluate the curricula for SBE programs periodically (and frequently) to ensure their currency and relevance (in courses, materials, and technologies), and explore ways to make the programs more flexible (see #3 above).

V. Reflective comments and curricular changes for assurance of learning

The School of Business and Economics established two task forces to explore the extent and the importance of coverage of (1) Relevance of teaching, business applications and experiential learning, and (2) general skills and knowledge in our business curriculum. The task forces examined the issues thoroughly and made a number of proposals to the faculty. One of the proposals resulted in cultivation

of funding from CTS Corporation and establishment of the CTS Center for Experiential Education (CTS-CEE) in 2007. Funded by a grant from the CTS Corporation, the CTS-CEE provides realistic learning situations in which students can apply the concepts and skills developed in the classroom setting. The goal is to offer students as many application opportunities as possible by encouraging the use of in-class case studies and simulations, field projects and student internships with local organizations. The CTS-CEE partners with members of the business community who provide project opportunities, internships, and other means for students to learn outside of the traditional classroom setting. The Center also provides resources for faculty members to become involved in the experiential learning process through faculty development and course development support. For more information, one can visit the website: <http://www.iusb.edu/~ctscee/index.shtml>.

The School has made a number of curricular changes in our undergraduate business curriculum as the result of direct or indirect area assessment of each concentration. For example, the faculty in accounting has added a course, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), to the list of required courses so that accounting students can learn about ERP and an integrated company-wide system approach as well as about the ERP application software (SAP) in the accounting area.

The Management faculty reviewed the requirements in the Entrepreneurship concentration to make it more practically valuable to students. “An understanding of markets and of marketing is essential for any entrepreneur to be successful”. In their view, a shortcoming of entrepreneurship students is their inability to systematically determine whether there is a market need for their business ideas—and then determine how to effectively meet that need. A stronger emphasis on marketing courses within the entrepreneurship concentration should help remedy this problem. Therefore, in order to make the small business and entrepreneurship concentration more valuable to students the faculty agreed to drop two of the existing concentration requirements (W430 and J404), and—in their place—add two marketing courses. Finally, Marketing faculty increased the number of required credit hours of marketing courses from 15 to 18 for both Marketing and Advertising concentrations to be consistent with other business concentrations.

In order to address the faculty’s concerns on student’s concepts in math and writing skills, we are scheduled to discuss the matter with our colleagues in the mathematics and English departments. We plan to reinforce the coordination and uniformity of coverage in multiple sections of core math (M118 and M119) and English (W131 and W230) courses. A few years ago, the issues were discussed between the School of Business and Economics, the chair of the mathematics department and a faculty member, regarding close coordination among instructors teaching the multiple sections of math courses. In addition, we increased the passing grade for students from “D-” to “C”. This requires any student who receives less than a “C” grade in M118 or M119 to retake the course. They must receive a “C” or higher grade. Following this, an improvement in student’s math skills has been noticed. A further re-evaluation of math and English course expectations is planned.
