

Detailed Assessment Report  
As of: 9/28/2012 02:08 PM EST  
2011-2012 Business Administration MBA\*\*

**Mission / Purpose**

Prepare students for upper management positions within public (e.g., health services & city, state, and federal government and their suppliers) and private enterprises (e.g., pharmaceutical firms, electric utilities, consumer packaged goods and industrial equipment manufacturers) thereby promoting economic development, meeting societal needs, and improving the quality of life for the organizations and the communities where they are employed.

**Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans**

**SLO 1: Concepts and techniques in all functional areas**

MBA graduates will demonstrate knowledge of business concepts and techniques in all relevant functional areas (e.g., managerial accounting, marketing, management, finance, and strategy).

**Relevant Associations:**

AACSB 2-15

**Related Measures:**

**M 1: MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Specific Areas**

Mean score of MBA students (subgrouped by location) on MBA-ETS Assessment Indicators for specific subscore areas (managerial accounting, finance, management, marketing and strategic integration)

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

**Target:**

MBA students will score at or above the national 60th percentile in each subscore area (managerial accounting, finance, management, marketing, strategic integration), subgrouped by campus location.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met**

Mean percent correct scores for assessment indicators of MBA students indicate this target was partially met. Results are reported for the Coast cohort (n=27). The scores indicate continued improvement in national percentile rankings in these assessment indicators, with significant improvement in some percentile rankings. The Spring, 2012 results are detailed below.

Assessment

Indicator	Mean % Correct	2012 % Rank	2012 % Rank
Managerial Accounting	56	77%	80%
Finance	44	49%	80%
Management	65	75%	50%
Marketing	70	96%	70%
Strategic Integration	59	81%	75%

These results indicate the performance target was met in 4 of the 5 areas assessed. Finance knowledge was the only area below the target of the 60th national percentile. When compared to the 2011 results, significant increases occurred in several areas. Rankings improved in Management, Marketing and Strategic Integration with the most dramatic improvement in Marketing knowledge (from the 70th percentile in 2011 to the 96th percentile in 2012). A similar improvement occurred in Management knowledge (from the 50th percentile in 2011 to the 75th percentile in 2012). Strategic Integration knowledge improved in 2012, though the improvement was not as dramatic. Managerial Accounting knowledge declined slightly (from the 80th percentile in 2011 to the 77th percentile in 2012). The most significant decrease occurred in Finance (from the 80th percentile to the 49th percentile). These results provide another year of evidence of enhanced learning outcomes, and the overall success of the 2009 MBA program revision.

The MBA ETS exam also serves as the comprehensive exam for the Professional MBA Program. During 2012, 2 of the 27 MBA students failed the comprehensive exam. Both of these students were full time students, similar in characteristics to the younger cohort previously represented on the Hattiesburg campus. Their performance on the ETS exam was dramatically lower than any of the other students, and they will be required to retake the ETS/comprehensive exam. When the scores for these students are omitted from the analysis, the percentile rankings increase. For full disclosure, percentile rankings for 2012 are presented below for the two groups (MBA students who took the ETS comprehensive exam compared to all MBA students who passed the exam).

Assessment Indicator	2012 Percentile Rank (all MBA's; n=27)	2012 Percentile Rank (MBA's passing the comp; n=25)
Managerial Accounting	77%	86%
Finance	49%	59%
Management	75%	84%
Marketing	96%	97%
Strategic Integration	81%	87%

The results for MBA students who passed the comprehensive exam (n=25) document improvements in 4 of 5 assessment categories, and also show that the achievement target of the 60th percentile ranking in Finance was almost met. In addition, ETS results provide more externally valid information about the learning outcomes at the conclusion of the MBA program. All of the results presented are derived from a comparison to 225 institutions using the MBA ETS exam, and to results derived from 14,406 MBA students who took the examination.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Meet with graduate management faculty**

*Established in Cycle: 2010-2011*

Given the decline in management national percentile rankings, a meeting will be held with the graduate management faculty to dis...

**Stability of faculty teaching MBA 640**

*Established in Cycle: 2011-2012*

Results from 2012 indicate the achievement target was not met in one area -- Finance. The immediate strategy is to achieve st...

### **M 2:Statistical Analysis Abilities**

Student performance (grouped by campus location) in statistical analysis skills, assessed on a comprehensive analysis project in MBA 610 using the "Mathematical and Statistical Accuracy" dimension on a 5 part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on this dimension, of a 5 part assessment rubric used in MBA 610.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Assessment results for the Spring, 2012 semester in MBA 610 (all students in Coast cohort) indicate this goal was met. Of the 32 students enrolled in the course, 20 (62.5%) students exceeded expectations in Mathematical and Statistical Accuracy and 10 students (31.3%) met expectations. Two students (6.3%) failed to meet expectations on this rubric dimension. Therefore, 93.8% of students assessed met or exceeded expectations on this measure in 2012.

### **M 11:Exam questions in MBA 660**

Thirteen exam questions will be used to assess knowledge of strategic integration concepts in MBA 660.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

#### **Target:**

MBA students will correctly answer 75% of these exam questions.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**

Exam questions in MBA 660 were not assessed in 2011-2012.

### **M 12:Exam questions in MBA 611**

Examination questions in MBA 611 will be aggregated and used to assess fundamental knowledge of accounting (O1) and the ability to utilize accounting information in performing analyses required for business decisions (O5).

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

#### **Target:**

MBA students will correctly answer 75% of these exam questions.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**

No assessment report based on examination questions in MBA 611 was received during the 2011-2012 reporting cycle.

### **M 13:ETS Mean Composite Score National Percentile Rankings**

MBA ETS Major Field Exam Mean Composite score is used to assess functional knowledge and critical thinking skills of all students in the MBA program. The trend over time will be analyzed for

continuous improvement, and successful loop closing.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

**Target:**

The mean composite score will meet or exceed the 70th percentile nationally.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

In 2012, the mean composite score on the ETS MBA major field test was analyzed for the Coast cohort (n=27). MBA students achieved a mean score of 256, which is ranked at the 78th national percentile. Therefore, the target was met. The national percentile ranking continues to increase; in 2011 the national percentile ranking achieved by all MBA students was the 75th percentile. The 2012 results compare our MBA students to students at 225 institutions and over 14,000 MBA ETS "test takers".

For full disclosure, these results were further analyzed. As stated in other assessment summary findings, 2 MBA students failed the MBA ETS comprehensive exam in 2012 with very low scores. When these scores are omitted from the analysis, results are even better for the 25 MBA students who passed the examination. These students achieved a mean composite score of 258, which places the group at the 84th percentile ranking.

2012 results add to a 7 year analysis of this assessment indicator, and once again show improvement in learning outcomes. Trend results are shown below, and provide a third year of evidence supporting the success of the program revision in 2009:

Year	National Percentile Ranking
2006	55th
2007	60th
2008	45th
2009	40th
2010	70th
2011	75th
2012	78th (for all test takers); 84th (for MBA students who passed the exam)

Further analysis indicates another learning outcome goal was achieved in 2012. The 2011-2012 academic year was the first year for 2 significant changes in the MBA program at Southern Miss:

1. The MBA program was reformatted as a Professional MBA Program and all courses were redesigned for delivery using a hybrid format.
2. All MBA students and courses met on the Coast campus only, forcing a combined or blended cohort of students. Full time students with no work experience were blended with part time students with significant work experience.

One goal of these changes was to elevate the performance and learning of the inexperienced, full time students. Prior assessments had indicated lower performance by the full time students over a number of years and analyses. Therefore, further analysis of 2012 results was completed by segmenting scores according to either full time student status or part time student status. There was no difference in the mean composite scores: part time students had an average score of 257 and full time students achieved the same

average score of 257. This provides initial evidence that combining the cohorts was successful, and did elevate the learning and performance of the full time, inexperienced MBA students.

### **M 15: Business Plan Assignment**

Performance on a comprehensive Business Plan paper assignment in MBA 605 will be used to assess competence across the functional areas of business knowledge.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on the Business Plan, assessed by a 13-part rubric.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Results are reported for the Fall, 2011 semester and represent the combined Coast cohort (n=31). The comprehensive business plan assignment rubric scores indicate that the target was not met. Of the 31 students enrolled, 23 (74%) met or exceeded expectations on the business plan. Ten students (32%) met expectations and 13 students (42%) exceeded expectations. Eight students (26%) failed to meet expectations. Detailed analysis according to rubric dimensions indicate the primary weakness was in the area of target market analysis. This is an improvement over the prior year's finding that indicated 4 areas of weakness in the business plans (target market, financial plan, operational plan and marketing plan). In the current year, student performance improved in 3 of the 4 deficient areas with the greatest improvement in the marketing plan section of the business plan.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

#### **More emphasis on target market understanding**

*Established in Cycle:* 2011-2012

In the 2012 course, more emphasis will be placed on the target market section of the business plan. While this portion was emph...

### **M 21: Individual cases in MBA 611**

MBA students will demonstrate knowledge of accounting and financial concepts and techniques in individual written cases in MBA 611.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students, subgrouped by campus will demonstrate knowledge of accounting and financial concepts/techniques on a series of individual written cases.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results indicate this target was met, and are reported for the Coast cohort of 30 students. Students submitted 9 individual cases during the semester; average case grade assessments are used to assess knowledge of accounting concepts and techniques. Six students (20%) exceeded expectations and 21 students (70%) met expectations. Therefore, 90% of students met or exceeded expectations on this dimension. Only 3 students (10%) failed to meet expectations.

### **M 23:Country Economic Analysis Project**

Performance on a semester-long comprehensive country analysis project will be assessed for knowledge of global economic concepts. Students collect and analyze one country's GDP, inflation, unemployment, interest rates, exchange rates and related information. Assessment results will be used as indicators for knowledge of business concepts and techniques (O1) and ability to integrate information and demonstrate creative critical thinking skills (O5). Written and graphic communication abilities will also be assessed (O2) on this written report, using 2 parts of a 4-part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on the country economic analysis project and demonstrate an understanding of global economic concepts and techniques, assessed in one section of a 4-part rubric.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 MBA 620 course (n=20) and the Coast cohort. Assessment results indicate the target was met. Thirteen students (65%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of global economic concepts and techniques; 7 students (35%) met expectations. Therefore, 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this assessment.

### **M 24:Comprehensive Clinical Case Study in Finance**

MBA students will complete a comprehensive individual clinical case study in Finance. The case specifically requires applying valuation techniques of Adjusted Present Value (APV) and Price Earnings Ratio (P/E) to value a company in a leveraged buyout transaction. Results will be assessed using 2 sections of a 4-part rubric. This assessment provides information for knowledge of basic finance concepts and techniques (O1) and ability to demonstrate creative critical thinking skills for business decision making (O5).

Source of Evidence: Project, either individual or group

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for knowledge of financial concepts and techniques on this comprehensive case study.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Results are reported for the Fall 2011 semester offering of MBA 640, and represent the Coast cohort (n=16). Three students exceeded expectations (18.8%) and 10 students (62.5%) met expectations for knowledge of financial concepts and techniques. Three students (18.8%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, the target was not met; 81.3% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this learning outcome.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

#### **Consistent faculty member in MBA 640**

*Established in Cycle: 2011-2012*

During the Fall, 2011 semester the MBA 640 course was team taught by 3 different faculty members. The regular graduate faculty ...

### **M 26:Presentations in MBA 650**

Students will complete two case presentations in the Global Business Systems course (MBA 650). These cases require an understanding of the Internet of Things, use of Social Media in business and Cloud Computing. Basic knowledge of global business systems concepts and techniques will be assessed for O1.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will demonstrate an understanding of concepts and techniques in global business systems in two case presentations. Knowledge will be assessed in one part of a 5-part rubric.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 semester in MBA 650; the Coast cohort included 30 students (n). Results indicate the target was met. Eleven students (36.7%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of global business system concepts (internet of things, cloud computing and social media usage), and 18 students met expectations (60%). One student (3.3%) failed to meet expectations in this learning outcome. Therefore, 97% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this knowledge area.

### **SLO 2:Leadership and Team Building Skills**

MBA graduates will demonstrate skills in leadership and team building.

#### **Relevant Associations:**

AACSB 2-18

#### **Related Measures:**

### **M 3:Comprehensive Group Case**

Leadership and team building skills are assessed on a comprehensive group case administered in MBA 660, the capstone course for the program. Leadership and teambuilding skills are evaluated using a case team performance appraisal rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations in leadership and team building skills, assessed using a team building case study rubric in MBA 660.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 MBA 660 class for the Coast cohort (n=27). Student teams presented a 30-minute formal case analysis to the class; following the case presentations, each team led a class discussion that was centered on the defense of their case solution. Subsequent to the presentations, the individual team members rated their peers using a 4-part team rubric (assessed teamwork, initiative, work outputs and knowledge). Results indicate the target was met. The majority of MBA students exceeded expectations for leadership and team building skills; 23 MBA students (85%) were in this

category. Four MBA students met expectations (15%). No students failed to meet expectations. Therefore, 100% of MBA students either exceeded or met expectations in this learning outcome.

#### **M 4:Leadership Skills Assessment**

Leadership skills will be assessed in MBA 600 course, using case assignments and specific exam questions. Rubric is being developed for this new course in the MBA program (Organizational Behavior and Leadership). Course content has changed with MBA program revision. Target date for assessment: Fall, 2011. Alternately, leadership and team building skills will be assessed in other MBA courses (i.e., MBA 600 or MBA 660) where students operate in teams and self-assess these skills using a rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

##### **Target:**

85% of MBA students (grouped by campus cohort) will meet or exceed expectations on leadership skills, as indicated on a rubric where students directly assess leadership and team building skills in assigned group work/cases.

##### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Leadership and team building skills were assessed in MBA 600. All results are for the Fall, 2011 semester for the combined Coast cohort (n=36 students). Results indicate this target was met; 3 students (8.4%) exceeded expectations and 31 students (86.1%) met expectations. Therefore 94.5% of students met or exceeded expectations in leadership and team building. Only 2 students (5.5%) failed to meet expectations in this dimension.

#### **SLO 3:Ethical and Cultural Awareness**

MBA graduates will demonstrate the ability to identify and understand ethical and cultural perspectives.

##### **Relevant Associations:**

AACSB 2-15, 2-18

##### **Related Measures:**

#### **M 5:Ethical and Cultural Awareness Case**

In-class case assignment in MBA 600 class to evaluate student skills in identifying and managing ethical and cultural diversity issues in business, evaluated with a 5 part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

##### **Target:**

85% of MBA students, subgrouped by campus cohort will meet or exceed expectations on an ethics and cultural awareness case assignment in MBA 600. Assessment results will be derived from a 5-part rubric.

##### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Ethical and cultural awareness was assessed in a comprehensive project in MBA 600. Results are reported for the Fall 2011 semester; 36 students were enrolled in the class and all results are reported for the Coast cohort. Results indicate this goal was met. Five students (13.9%) exceeded expectations and 29 students (80.6%) met expectations when identifying and relating critical ethical and cultural issues in the comprehensive case. Therefore, 94.5%



of students met or exceeded expectations in this learning outcome. Only 2 students (5.5%) failed to meet expectations.

#### **M 14:RCR Training Completion**

Effective Spring, 2011 the Vice President for Research implemented a mandatory "Responsible Conduct of Research" online training program for all graduate students. This online training module includes extensive content on the ethical conduct of research, and cultural differences in perspectives and research teams. Each year, we will assess the percentage of MBA students who successfully complete the training program.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

##### **Target:**

All new MBA students (100%) will complete RCR training while in the MBA program.

##### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**

RCR completion rates are not reported in this cycle.

##### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

##### **Communicate the RCR training requirement to MBA students**

*Established in Cycle:* 2010-2011

During the next year, we will communicate the need to complete this mandatory training at several points during each semester. ...

#### **M 25:Ethical Case in Finance**

Students will complete a group clinical case in Finance that investigates a violation of the Exchange Act and SEC rules. Students will be required to compare and contrast the legal and ethical foundations of the case, and to evaluate the ethical and legal conduct in the financial industry. Results will be assessed and related to O3.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

##### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on this ethical case analysis in finance. Students must demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast legal and ethical concepts in the case and to evaluate ethical and legal conduct in the financial industry.

##### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Fall 2011 semester offering of MBA 640 and the Coast cohort (n=16). Ability to analyze and understand ethical and legal concepts and conduct is assessed using a case rubric. Results indicate this target was met. Twelve students (75%) exceeded expectations and 4 students (25%) met expectations in this learning outcome. Therefore, 100% of MBA students demonstrated an awareness and understanding of ethical issues in the financial industry.

#### **M 27:Ethical case in information systems**

Students will complete an ethical case in MBA 650 (Global Business Systems). This written case will address ethical and privacy issues, security of global information systems and social media usage. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify and analyze ethical issues; this

assessment will be linked to O3.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations regarding the ability to identify and analyze ethical issues in this written case in information systems, assessed by one part of a 5-part rubric.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 offering of MBA 650, for the Coast cohort (n=30). Six students (20%) exceeded expectations regarding the ability to identify and analyze ethical issues in privacy, information security and social media usage by business; 22 students met expectations (73.3%). Only 2 students (6.7%) failed to meet expectations in this learning outcome. Therefore, 93% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this dimension.

**SLO 4:Effective communication skills**

MBA graduates will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively.

**Relevant Associations:**

AACSB 2-15, 2-18

**Related Measures:**

**M 6:Statistical Analysis Comprehensive Assignment**

Written and graphic communication abilities will be assessed in a final comprehensive assignment in MBA 610, using 2 dimensions on a 5-part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations in written and graphic communication abilities on a comprehensive analysis case assignment in MBA 610, subgrouped by campus location.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Assessment results for the Spring, 2012 semester in MBA 610 indicate this goal was met. All findings are for the Coast cohort (n=32). Specifically, 28 students (87.5%) exceeded expectations in written communication skills and 3 students (9.4%) met expectations. One student (3.1%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, 96.9% of students met or exceeded expectations in written communication skills. In graphic communication skills assessment, 18 students (56.3%) exceeded expectations and 10 students (31.3%) met expectations. Four students (12.5%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, 87.5% of students met or exceeded expectations in graphic communication skills.

**M 7:Written and Presentation Communication Skills Assignments**

Written and verbal/presentation communications skills assessed in multiple case assignments in MBA 660, the capstone course in the program. Written communication skills assessed using a 6-part written communication rubric; verbal/presentation skills assessed using a 6-part oral communication rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations in written and oral/presentation communication skills assignments in the capstone course, MBA 660.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**

Written and verbal communication skills were not assessed in MBA 660 during 2011-2012.

**M 16:Group oral presentation of business plan**

Group oral presentations of business plans in MBA 605 will be used to assess communication skills of MBA students.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on the group oral presentations of the business plan project.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Fall 2011 section of MBA 605; all results represent the combined Coast cohort of 31 students. Results indicate that 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations on the oral group presentations of their business plan projects, defined as scoring above 85% on the presentation (measured by a presentation rubric).

**M 18:Presentation scores on MBA 611 cases**

Scores for oral presentations of MBA 611 cases will be used to assess communication skills (LO4).

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on case presentations in MBA 611, judged by the faculty member and by peer assessments of presentation skills.

**M 19:Written assignments in MBA 600**

Written communication skills will be assessed on specific organizational behavior and leadership concepts/theories in MBA 600 course.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

**Target:**

85% of MBA students, subgrouped by campus cohort will meet or exceed expectations on written communications skills in MBA 600. Assessment results will be derived from a series of written assignments on specific organizational behavior and leadership concepts.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Assessment results indicate this target was met; results are reported for the Coast cohort (n=36). Six students (16.7%) exceeded expectations and 28 students (77.8%) met expectations. Therefore, 94.5% of students met or exceeded expectations for written communication skills. Only 2 students (5.5%) failed to meet expectations in this dimension.

## **M 22: Individual presentations in MBA 611**

Students' individual presentation grades will be used to assess verbal presentation skills, scored on a presentation rubric.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for oral presentation skills.

### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Results indicate this target was not met, and are reported for the Coast cohort of 30 students. Six students (20%) exceeded expectations for verbal presentation skills and 14 students (47%) met expectations. Therefore, 67% of students met or exceeded expectations on this dimension. Ten students (33%) failed to meet expectations of verbal presentation skills.

### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

### **Emphasize presentation skills at beginning of course in MBA 611**

*Established in Cycle:* 2011-2012

The professor will adjust early lectures to emphasize and train students in presentation skills at the beginning of the course.

## **M 23: Country Economic Analysis Project**

Performance on a semester-long comprehensive country analysis project will be assessed for knowledge of global economic concepts. Students collect and analyze one country's GDP, inflation, unemployment, interest rates, exchange rates and related information. Assessment results will be used as indicators for knowledge of business concepts and techniques (O1) and ability to integrate information and demonstrate creative critical thinking skills (O5). Written and graphic communication abilities will also be assessed (O2) on this written report, using 2 parts of a 4-part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for written and graphic communication abilities, assessed by 2 parts of a 4-part rubric.

### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring 2012 MBA 620 course and the Coast cohort (n=20). The assessment of written communication abilities indicates the target was met. Sixteen students (80%) exceeded expectations and 4 students (20%) met expectations for written communication skills; therefore, 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations. The assessment of graphic communication abilities indicates the target was met. Four students (20%) exceeded expectations and 16 students (80%) met expectations for graphic communication abilities. Again, 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations although the analysis indicates that their written communication skills were stronger than their graphic communication abilities.

### **M 28:Comprehensive project in global business systems**

Students will complete a comprehensive, semester-long project in MBA 650 and submit a written report. The project on low carbon supply chain management and business intelligence will be used to assess written communication skills (O4) and critical thinking skills for business decision making (O5).

Source of Evidence: Project, either individual or group

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for written communication skills on the comprehensive project in MBA 650, assessed by one part of a 5-part rubric.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 MBA 650 and represent the Coast cohort (n=30). On the comprehensive written project, 7 students (23.3%) exceeded expectations for written communication abilities and 20 students (66.7%) met expectations. Three students (10%) failed to meet expectations for written communication abilities. Therefore, the target was met; 90% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this learning dimension.

### **SLO 5:Creative Critical Thinking Skills**

MBA graduates will demonstrate creative critical thinking skills by integrating and applying appropriate concepts, technologies and decision making techniques to effectively evaluate and manage a business in a global environment.

#### **Relevant Associations:**

AACSB 2-15

#### **Related Measures:**

### **M 8:MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Composite Score**

MBA ETS Major Field Exam Composite Score is used to assess strategic integration and critical thinking abilities of all students in the MBA program, subgrouped by campus location.

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

#### **Target:**

85% of MBA students will have a composite ETS score above the national median score, subgrouped by campus location.

#### **Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Findings for the Spring, 2012 ETS administration are reported for the Coast cohort (n=27). Individual score reports were used to calculate the number of students who achieved or exceeded the national median composite score of 248 reported by ETS. This goal was achieved by 18 of the 27 MBA's who took the exam (66%). Therefore, the (somewhat ambitious) achievement target was not met in 2012. However, the scores for 5 of the students who did not achieve the target of 248 were very close (their scores were in the 245 - 247 range).

In addition, 2 of the MBA students did not achieve a passing grade on the MBA ETS exam (which also serves as the comprehensive exam in the program). When the analysis is repeated for the MBA students who passed the comprehensive exam (n=25) the percentage

who achieved the performance target increases to 72% (i.e., 18 of 25 MBA's scoring above 248 on the exam). In addition, the 7 students who did not score above the median had composite scores very close to the target. Four of these students had composite scores of 247, and the other 3 students' composite scores ranged from 241 - 246.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Continue analysis of ETS total score performance**

*Established in Cycle: 2010-2011*

The MBA cohorts will be combined in the Fall, 2011 semester since the program has been consolidated to the Coast campus. We wil...

**Encourage preparation for MBA ETS exam**

*Established in Cycle: 2011-2012*

The plan is to increase the attention paid to the MBA ETS exam and to encourage more preparation for the examination. The profe...

**M 9:Analytical Comprehensive Assignment**

Comprehensive analysis assignment in MBA 610, subgrouped by campus location. Creativity and strategic integration/managerial relevance of recommendations will be assessed on two dimensions of a 5 part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on a comprehensive analytical case assignment in two dimensions (creativity and analytical curiosity; managerial usefulness of the analysis) of a 5 part rubric used in MBA 610.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Assessment results indicate this goal was not met in MBA 610. Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 semester and represent the Coast cohort (n=32). Specifically, 27 students (84.4%) met or exceeded expectations in the creativity and analytical curiosity dimension (16 students (50%) exceeded expectations and 11 students (34.4%) met expectations). Five students (15.6%) failed to meet expectations in this dimension. Similarly, 26 students (81.3%) met or exceeded expectations in the critical thinking/managerial usefulness of the analysis dimension; 15 students (46.9%) exceeded expectations and 11 students (34.4%) met expectations. Six students (18.8%) failed to meet expectations in this dimension.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Adjust lectures on creativity and managerial usefulness**

*Established in Cycle: 2011-2012*

Lecture material on creative and managerially useful analysis will be adjusted in the Spring, 2013 course offering to place mo...

**M 10:Strategic Case Analysis**

Strategic integration, critical thinking and decision making abilities will be assessed on a comprehensive case in MBA 660, the capstone course for the MBA program.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

85% of MBA students (grouped by campus cohort) will meet or exceed expectations in strategic integration, critical thinking and decision making skills, assessed using case analyses in the course. Two dimensions on a case analysis rubric (content and analytical skills) will be utilized for this assessment.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring, 2012 MBA 660 course and represent the Coast cohort (n=27). Students prepared 5 written case analyses during the semester; results are reported for the first case (Cola Wars) and the last case (PepsiCo). Results indicate the target was met, and also show improvement in performance between measures. On the early case in the semester, 20 students (74%) exceeded expectations and 7 students (26%) met expectations in strategic integration, critical thinking and decision making skills on two dimensions of the case evaluation rubric. No student failed to meet expectations on the early case. On the last case in the semester, performance improved. All 27 students (100%) exceeded expectations in this learning outcome. Therefore, student abilities in this area improved over the course of the semester as more strategic case analysis skills were covered and demonstrated in class.

**M 12:Exam questions in MBA 611**

Examination questions in MBA 611 will be aggregated and used to assess fundamental knowledge of accounting (O1) and the ability to utilize accounting information in performing analyses required for business decisions (O5).

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

MBA students will correctly answer 75% of these exam questions.

**M 13:ETS Mean Composite Score National Percentile Rankings**

MBA ETS Major Field Exam Mean Composite score is used to assess functional knowledge and critical thinking skills of all students in the MBA program. The trend over time will be analyzed for continuous improvement, and successful loop closing.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

**Target:**

The mean composite score will meet or exceed the 70th percentile nationally.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

In 2012, the mean composite score on the ETS major field test for the MBA program was analyzed for the combined Coast cohort (n=27). The students achieved a mean composite score of 256, ranking at the 78th percentile nationally. Therefore, the target was met.

Further analysis reveals:

1. When the 2 students who failed the exam are omitted from the analysis, the 25 MBA students who passed the exam had a mean composite score of 258 (the 84th percentile).

2. A comparison of the mean composite scores of full time, inexperienced students to part-time working professionals reveals no difference in the mean composite score. Both groups earned a mean composite score of 257, ranked at the 82nd percentile nationally.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Continue analysis of ETS percentile rankings**

*Established in Cycle: 2010-2011*

We will continue to analyze national percentile rankings based on the ETS mean composite scores. The MBA program is being conso...

**M 17:Case presentations in MBA 611**

Group case presentations in MBA 611 will be evaluated to depth of content and ability to respond to case presentations, and used to assess LO 5.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on case presentations in MBA 611, scored for depth of content and ability to answer case questions.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Results for 2011 indicate this target was not met, and are reported for the Coast cohort of 30 students. Assessment results are derived from a case grading rubric that includes scores for the depth of the written analysis and the presentation. Students were divided into groups of 3 for this assessment, so results are reported for 10 group case presentations. Two groups (6 students, or 20%) exceeded expectations on the comprehensive case analysis; 6 groups (18 students, or 60%) met expectations on the creative critical thinking dimension. Therefore, 80% of students met or exceeded expectations. Two groups (6 students, or 20%) failed to meet expectations.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Improve critical thinking analysis of accounting cases**

*Established in Cycle: 2011-2012*

Increase lecture time and materials that focus on strategic critical thinking skills applied to financial case analysis.

**M 20:Case Presentation in MBA 600**

Students must demonstrate the ability to apply leadership and organizational behavior constructs, explain their significance, and extrapolate how these dynamics impact the workplace in a comprehensive case project presentation in MBA 600.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

**Target:**

85% of MBA students, subgrouped by campus cohort will meet or exceed expectations regarding creative critical thinking skills when applying and interpreting organizational behavior and leadership constructs to an organizational setting.



**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results indicate this target was met, and are reported for the Coast cohort (n=36). Five students (13.9%) exceeded expectations for critical thinking on the comprehensive case project presentation; 29 students (80.6%) met expectations. Therefore, 94.5% of students met or exceeded expectations on this learning outcome. Only 2 students (5.5%) failed to meet expectations.

**M 23:Country Economic Analysis Project**

Performance on a semester-long comprehensive country analysis project will be assessed for knowledge of global economic concepts. Students collect and analyze one country's GDP, inflation, unemployment, interest rates, exchange rates and related information. Assessment results will be used as indicators for knowledge of business concepts and techniques (O1) and ability to integrate information and demonstrate creative critical thinking skills (O5). Written and graphic communication abilities will also be assessed (O2) on this written report, using 2 parts of a 4-part rubric.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for ability to integrate global economic concepts and to forecast interest rates, exchange rates, inflation rates and unemployment rates in applied business decision making, assessed by one section of a 4-part rubric.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring 2012 MBA 620 course and the Coast cohort (n=20). Student performance was assessed for ability to integrate economic concepts to analyze and forecast interest rates, exchange rates, inflation rate and unemployment rate. The assessment is based on a comprehensive semester-long country analysis project and report. Results indicate the target was met. Thirteen students (65%) exceeded expectations on this dimension and 7 students met expectations (35%). Therefore, 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations on this assessment.

**M 24:Comprehensive Clinical Case Study in Finance**

MBA students will complete a comprehensive individual clinical case study in Finance. The case specifically requires applying valuation techniques of Adjusted Present Value (APV) and Price Earnings Ratio (P/E) to value a company in a leveraged buyout transaction. Results will be assessed using 2 sections of a 4-part rubric. This assessment provides information for knowledge of basic finance concepts and techniques (O1) and ability to demonstrate creative critical thinking skills for business decision making (O5).

Source of Evidence: Project, either individual or group

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for ability to critically analyze financial concepts and techniques in this comprehensive case study, to apply financial valuation techniques and value a company in a leveraged buyout transaction.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Not Met**

Results are reported for the Fall, 2011 semester in the MBA 640 class, and represent the

Coast cohort (n=16). Three students (18.8%) exceeded expectations for creative critical thinking and ability to apply financial concepts and techniques in this comprehensive case; 9 students (56.2%) met expectations on this learning outcome. Therefore the target was not met; 75% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations. Four students (25%) failed to meet expectations in this dimension.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Consistent faculty member in MBA 640**

*Established in Cycle:* 2011-2012

During the Fall 2011 semester, 3 different faculty members team taught this course. The regular graduate faculty member was on ...

**M 28:Comprehensive project in global business systems**

Students will complete a comprehensive, semester-long project in MBA 650 and submit a written report. The project on low carbon supply chain management and business intelligence will be used to assess written communication skills (O4) and critical thinking skills for business decision making (O5).

Source of Evidence: Project, either individual or group

**Target:**

85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for critical thinking skills in global business systems. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply and analyze systems concepts in low carbon supply chain management and business intelligence on this comprehensive written project, assessed by one part of a 5-part rubric.

**Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Spring 2012 MBA 650 class and represent the Coast cohort (n=30). Students performed well in critical thinking and integrative abilities on the comprehensive systems project. Twelve students (40%) exceeded expectations and 15 students (50%) met expectations for these abilities; only 3 students (10%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, the target was met; 90% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this learning outcome.

**Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)**

**Communicate the RCR training requirement to MBA students**

During the next year, we will communicate the need to complete this mandatory training at several points during each semester. Our communications will include the expectation that training is to be completed during the first semester in the MBA program. We will continue to monitor completion rates.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** Finished

**Priority:** Low

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** RCR Training Completion | **Outcome/Objective:** Ethical and Cultural Awareness

**Projected Completion Date:** 06/14/2012

**Responsible Person/Group:** MBA Director, Dean of the Graduate School, Provost, Vice President for Research

### **Continue analysis of ETS percentile rankings**

We will continue to analyze national percentile rankings based on the ETS mean composite scores. The MBA program is being consolidated to the Coast campus in Fall, 2011. Although future assessments will be based on one combined cohort of MBA students, the GPAC will continue to study differences between full time students and working professional students. The consolidation strategy for the MBA program should elevate the performance of the full time students. ETS results are a key assessment indicator for the MBA program and were carefully analyzed in 2012. This analysis will continue through the 2012-2013 academic year.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** Medium

### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** ETS Mean Composite Score National Percentile Rankings | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills

**Projected Completion Date:** 07/31/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** MBA Director and GPAC

### **Continue analysis of ETS total score performance**

The MBA cohorts will be combined in the Fall, 2011 semester since the program has been consolidated to the Coast campus. We will continue to monitor composite score performance on the ETS exam, and study performance differences between the full time students and the working professional students. We hope to observe improved performance in the full time student group, when the two cohorts are combined into one. Results in 2011-2012 indicate improved performance on this assessment indicator and no difference in the mean composite scores of full time or part time MBA students. This provided a first year of evidence of improved performance by younger, less experienced students and an early indication of the success of a blended cohort. We will continue to monitor this indicator during the 2012-2013 year.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** Medium

### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Composite Score | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills

**Projected Completion Date:** 07/31/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** MBA Director and GPAC

### **Meet with graduate management faculty**

Given the decline in management national percentile rankings, a meeting will be held with the graduate management faculty to discuss assessment results. Early reviews of ETS question types in the management area indicate that more attention should be paid to coverage of human resource and production management/logistics content. Minor adjustments in three courses (MBA 600, 650 and 660) should address these deficiencies. This deficiency was communicated to the graduate faculty in

management during the 2011-2012 academic year, with special focus on the MBA 600 and MBA 650 classes. ETS results indicate significant improvement in the management knowledge area during 2012, providing some evidence that the course modifications and adjustments were successful.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** Finished

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Specific Areas | **Outcome/Objective:** Concepts and techniques in all functional areas

**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2012

**Responsible Person/Group:** MBA Director and Management Faculty

**Adjust lectures on creativity and managerial usefulness**

Lecture material on creative and managerially useful analysis will be adjusted in the Spring, 2013 course offering to place more importance on these aspects of analysis.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** Low

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Analytical Comprehensive Assignment | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills

**Projected Completion Date:** 03/15/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

**Consistent faculty member in MBA 640**

During the Fall 2011 semester, 3 different faculty members team taught this course. The regular graduate faculty member was on family medical leave for 1/2 the semester. This lack of consistency in faculty instruction, presentations and learning expectations contributed to this assessment result. In the Fall 2012 semester, 1 graduate faculty member will teach the course and assessment results should improve when instruction is consistent.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** Low

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Clinical Case Study in Finance | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills

**Projected Completion Date:** 12/15/2012

**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

**Consistent faculty member in MBA 640**

During the Fall, 2011 semester the MBA 640 course was team taught by 3 different faculty members. The regular graduate faculty member was on extended family medical leave for 1/2 the semester and during this absence two other faculty members taught the class. This faculty inconsistency impacted learning of financial concepts and techniques, due to the ad hoc nature of course coverage during the semester. The course is being taught by one graduate faculty member during the Fall 2012 semester and

knowledge of financial concepts and techniques should improve with consistent instruction.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** Low

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Clinical Case Study in Finance | **Outcome/Objective:** Concepts and techniques in all functional areas

**Projected Completion Date:** 12/15/2012

**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

### **Emphasize presentation skills at beginning of course in MBA 611**

The professor will adjust early lectures to emphasize and train students in presentation skills at the beginning of the course.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** Low

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Individual presentations in MBA 611 | **Outcome/Objective:** Effective communication skills

**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

### **Encourage preparation for MBA ETS exam**

The plan is to increase the attention paid to the MBA ETS exam and to encourage more preparation for the examination. The professor teaching MBA 660 during the Spring, 2013 semester will emphasize the importance of the examination to all MBA students during the semester, and encourage all to complete multiple practice tests prior to the official exam. The MBA Director will contribute to this effort as well via email and personal communications with all students in MBA 660 at the beginning of the Spring, 2013 term.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** Medium

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Composite Score | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills

**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2013

**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member and MBA Director

### **Improve critical thinking analysis of accounting cases**

Increase lecture time and materials that focus on strategic critical thinking skills applied to financial case analysis.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** Low

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Case presentations in MBA 611 | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills  
**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2013  
**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

### **More emphasis on target market understanding**

In the 2012 course, more emphasis will be placed on the target market section of the business plan. While this portion was emphasized more during the 2011 course, the students' performance does not reflect the increased lecture and discussion in the area. The professor will continue to enhance the importance of understanding and carefully detailing the target market in the business plan.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012  
**Implementation Status:** In-Progress  
**Priority:** Low

### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Business Plan Assignment | **Outcome/Objective:** Concepts and techniques in all functional areas  
**Projected Completion Date:** 12/14/2012  
**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

### **Stability of faculty teaching MBA 640**

Results from 2012 indicate the achievement target was not met in one area -- Finance. The immediate strategy is to achieve stability in the faculty member teaching MBA 640 (Managerial Finance). This strategy is underway in the Fall 2012 course offering. During the fall of 2011, the faculty member who regularly teaches the course was on family medical leave for half of the semester. Therefore, in 2011 the MBA 640 course was team taught by 3 different finance faculty members. While this was necessary a year ago, it is not an ideal learning environment for MBA students. During the fall 2012 semester, stability has returned and the course is being taught by a senior Finance faculty member. The expectation is that Finance scores will improve in 2013.

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012  
**Implementation Status:** In-Progress  
**Priority:** Medium

### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Specific Areas | **Outcome/Objective:** Concepts and techniques in all functional areas  
**Projected Completion Date:** 05/31/2013  
**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

## **Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers**

### **What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?**

The 2011-2012 academic year was the first year for two significant changes to the MBA program:  
1) the program was reformatted to a Professional MBA Program with a hybrid course delivery schedule, and;  
2) all MBA students (full time and part time) formed a "blended cohort" in classes on the Gulf Coast campus.

Given these changes, the assessment goal was to "over-assess" in MBA courses to track the effects on learning outcomes; during the year, assessment measures were collected and analyzed in all of the 8 required courses in the MBA program (600, 605, 610, 611, 620, 640, 650 and 660). Collectively, the 2011-2012 assessment results document two things:

- 1) no declines in performance due to the new program format, and;
- 2) success for the blended cohort, documented by increases in the performance of the full time MBA students (previously analyzed as the Hattiesburg cohort).

The 2011-2012 assessment results continue to document strengths across all Learning Objectives, where MBA students met or exceeded target goals in the following areas and MBA courses:

1. O1: Basic Business Knowledge - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 610, 611, 620, 650 and on the MBA-ETS Field Test
2. O2: Cultural and Ethical Awareness - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 600, 640 and 650
3. O3: Leadership and Team Building - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 600 and 660
4. O4: Communication Skills - Targets met or exceeded in written, graphic and verbal skills in MBA 600, 605, 610, 620 and 650
5. O5: Creative Critical Thinking - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 600, 620, 650, 660 and on the MBA-ETS Field Test

Collectively, our assessments document continued improvement in the 5 learning goals for the program, and provide a third year of evidence regarding the success of the program revision in 2009. Results on the 2012 MBA ETS Field Test (which also serves as the comprehensive examination in the program) continue to exceed our goals and expectations for student learning that is documented at the conclusion of the program and internationally "normed" against over 14,000 MBA students at 225 institutions. In 2011 our MBA cohort ranked at the 75th percentile on this exam (based on our mean composite score) and in 2012 this ranking increased to the 78th percentile for the entire group. When the scores for 2 MBA students who failed the exam are removed from the cohort, the 25 MBA students who passed the exam ranked at the 84th percentile. This is an outstanding result. In addition, analysis of the ETS performance by part time, professional students compared to full time, inexperienced students indicate no difference in the mean score. This provides a first year of evidence that the blended cohort has been successful, and the performance of full time students has been elevated.

### **What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?**

The 2011-2012 assessment results show that continued attention should be paid to the "highest order" learning outcome in the MBA program: the development of creative and critical thinking abilities that are applied to business decision making. When the results are analyzed for targets not met:

1. O1: Basic Business Knowledge - the 85% goal (meeting or exceeding expectations) was not met on the MBA 640 comprehensive case in Finance (81.3% of students met the goal ) and the national 60% subscore goal on the ETS was not met in Finance (students achieved the 59th percentile in this subscore area).
2. O4: Communication Skills - the 85% goal was not met in one MBA class (MBA 611, Managerial Accounting); only 67% of students met expectations for case presentation skills.

3. O5: Creative Critical Thinking - our 85% targets were not met in several areas:

a. MBA 610 comprehensive analysis paper - 84% of students met or exceeded expectations.

b. MBA 605 business plan project - 74% of students met or exceeded expectations

c. MBA 611 comprehensive case project - 80% of students met or exceeded expectations

d. MBA 640 comprehensive case project - 75% of students met or exceeded expectations

4. O5: Our goal is that 85% of MBA students will score at or above the median score on the MBA-ETS field exam. While this is an ambitious goal, more progress can be made. In 2011-2012 72% of our MBA students met the goal, and most of the students who did not meet the goal were within 5 points of achieving the median score.

During the next year, the MBA faculty will continue to emphasize development of creative critical thinking abilities across all courses in the MBA curriculum. This is our most important task and we will continue to assess results. Other areas that need attention are lower priority areas. Most of our assessment measures indicate MBA students meet goals in basic business knowledge; the results above indicate that O1 targets were not met in the Finance area. There has been considerable turnover in the graduate faculty member who teaches MBA 640 over the last 5 years. If a consistent faculty presence can be achieved in the course, outcomes in Finance should improve. Improving communication skills in MBA 611 is the lowest priority, because assessments in 5 other MBA courses (of written, graphic and verbal skills) indicate that students are exceeding targets. The deficiency in MBA 611 during 2011-2012 can likely be addressed by individual adjustments in early lectures made by the faculty member.

## Annual Report Section Responses

### **Program Summary**

The 2011-2012 year was the third year of new MBA program requirements. Our assessment results indicate continued improvement in learning outcomes in accounting, marketing, management and strategic integration/critical thinking. Overall performance on the MBA ETS Field Exam increased for the third year since program revision; the mean composite score for all MBA's who took the ETS MBA Major Field Test improved from a national ranking at the 70th percentile (2010) to the 75th percentile (2011) to the 84th percentile in 2012. This trended result provides a third year of evidence documenting the success of the MBA program revision and earlier loop closing activities. Strengths in basic business knowledge (O1), cultural and ethical awareness (O2), leadership and team building (O3), communication skills in all areas (O4) and creative critical thinking (O5) were clearly documented by assessment activities during the 2011-2012 year.

The 2011-2012 year was the first year the MBA program was redesigned. Specifically, the program became a Professional MBA Program with all classes delivered using a hybrid format. This change was designed to better serve the part time working student while still accommodating the full time student, since the program consolidated to the Gulf Coast campus. As expected when a program is eliminated on one campus, enrollment declined but new recruiting strategies are underway to increase enrollment by working professionals while continuing to serve full time students. The year provided early evidence of the success of program revision, particularly the blended cohort of MBA students. Assessment results show the performance of full time students was elevated by the change.

Work continued to develop the MBA program by offering diverse elective choices to MBA students.



During the 2011-2012 year, graduate electives in international business, financial statement analysis, market planning and organizational communications were offered. In addition, the College of Business has formally partnered with the Masters degree in Logistics, Trade and Transportation so that MBA students can choose all electives in this area for an emphasis in LTT. Preliminary discussions with faculty in the Masters degree program in Economic Development took place during the year, with plans to partner with this program and offer an additional field emphasis in ED in the near future.

In addition, new programs aimed at globalizing the faculty, students and programs continued. Graduate students participated in 2 study abroad programs: the British Studies Program and Panama. For the second year, College of Business graduate students participated in the Panama program; in just one year, CoB enrollment in this program increased from 5 students in 2011 to 15 students in 2012. Student participation tripled in one year, and a new business faculty member went to Panama in 2012. In the spring of 2012, 3 faculty members traveled to the Far East to plan a new Asian Studies Program for the College of Business. When this program begins, MBA students and business faculty will be able to select study abroad electives in more areas of the world. This enhances the global awareness of our students and faculty in the College.

During the year the Graduate Programs and Assessment Committee (GPAC) continued to improve the applicant review and admissions process, and carefully reviewed assessment results. GPAC members also reviewed our admission requirements, with plans to increase the value of work experience in admissions decisions for part time students. The GPAC also discussed and approved the design of a new graduate certificate in the Foundations of Business. Plans are to formalize the certificate program during the 2012-2013 year. Discussions with graduate directors in other programs, such as the Masters in Nurse Executive program, took place and the GPAC members realize this certificate will enhance the partnerships with other Colleges and programs and serve additional markets for graduate business education. The 2011-2012 year was our AACSB reaccreditation year, with outstanding results. The visitation team determined the College "passed with flying colors", and this included the structure of the MBA program and our assessment activities and results over the prior 5 year period of review.

Graduate faculty members continued to work with MBA students on directed study projects that resulted in manuscripts. Submissions by MBA students increased to the Graduate Research Symposium and to Synergy, the graduate student journal at Southern Miss. While not directly linked to assessment results, this is an important continuous improvement initiative for the MBA program.

### **Continuous Improvement Initiatives**

During the 2011-2012 year there were several continuous improvement initiatives not directly linked to the assessment of learning outcomes in the MBA program.

1. Increase study abroad opportunities and participation by MBA students. More students traveled to Panama in 2012 than in 2011; MBA students joined students in the MPA program, the Masters in Logistics, Trade and Transportation and the Masters in Economic Development. This globalizes our MBA students and provides the additional benefit of understanding diverse perspectives on the importance of Panama to world trade. Students learned from each other due to Panama research projects that crossed all areas.
2. As planned in 2010-2011, a more dynamic scheduling model was developed and implemented in 2011-2012. The program was redesigned as a Professional MBA Program with a hybrid course delivery format. Student response to the new format has been very positive, particularly in the working professional cohort. Assessment results indicate no declines in learning outcomes due to the change. While this change required an adjustment on the part of students and faculty, both groups report positive results from the class delivery format change.

3. The 2011-2012 year also marked increased partnering with other programs on campus. The MBA Director worked with graduate directors in Nursing, LTT and Economic Development to expand the scope of our MBA program while also providing graduate business electives to other graduate students on campus. The College now has a formal agreement with the Masters degree in LTT; MBA students can choose their electives for an emphasis area and LTT students can choose MBA courses for a business elective emphasis. This work will continue during the 2012-2013 year with similar partnerships in Economic Development programs and graduate Nursing programs.

### **Closing the Loop**

The 2011-2012 year provided more evidence of the successful MBA program revision in 2009. Faculty participation in assessment activities increased substantially; the 2011-2012 year was the first year that all MBA required courses included formal assessment of learning outcomes across all 5 learning objectives. This was important for two reasons:

1. The program format changed to a Professional MBA Program with hybrid course delivery. It was critical to "over-assess" during the year and track the effects on learning due to the change.
2. Assessments in all 8 required MBA courses also expanded our culture of assessment for MBA faculty members. Each year, more faculty participate in learning assessments which involves more graduate faculty in the importance of these activities. It also means that more MBA faculty study the learning outcomes in the MBA program and the results of their classroom activities and expectations for students. The faculty members assess the things that worked, and those that can be improved. Ultimately, this leads to continuous improvement adjustments and loop closing in every MBA course.

The 2011-2012 year assessments were the third year of loop closing for the MBA program, and will continue in the 2012-2013 year. All of our results indicate improved learning outcomes at the macro and micro, course-specific levels. As we collect and analyze more assessment results, more graduate faculty become involved in the discussion and assessment process. Each year our culture of assessment improves and expands.

In 2012-2013, loop closing activities will continue internally and expand to external audiences. The 2012 MBA ETS Field Test results are outstanding; our MBA graduates rank at the 84th percentile internationally when compared to over 14,000 MBA graduates at 225 institutions. This documents the quality of our program and the success of our students. However, it has little value if we do not clearly communicate this to our external constituents. Therefore, work has begun on a strategic marketing plan to clearly position the Southern Miss Professional MBA Program as the preferred provider in the market. When employers, prospective students and business organizations understand the quality of our program compared to competitive programs we will close the loop with external constituents as well.

It is equally important to close the loop at the executive, internal level of the College of Business. Department Chairs, Associate and Assistant Deans need to review and understand our program results. Then, they can fully participate in the changes needed in specific courses and also the external communication of MBA program quality to CoB constituents. Now that the 2011-2012 analysis is complete, the results will be shared and discussed at an Executive Committee meeting in early October, 2012. Then, internal changes needed (such as stability in the graduate faculty presence in Finance) and internal successes realized (such as outstanding ETS results and significant increases in subscores in marketing) can be discussed and addressed at the managerial level in the College.

The final loop closing activity that is evident from the 2011-2012 results is planned on an internal, micro

level. While faculty participation in assessment has increased, many faculty members can improve the rubrics used to assess learning outcomes in their courses. Some faculty members use well-developed rubrics and others (who are new to assessment) use less specific assessment rubrics. During the 2012-2013 year, the MBA Director (who also Chairs the GPAC and writes this annual report) will work with specific graduate faculty members to improve their measurement rubrics.