MEMORANDUM

TO: Carl Backman
FROM: Ed Ranelli
DATE: November 24, 2004


Attached is a proposal and request for funding for a QEP pilot study developed by the management faculty for assessment of learning outcomes in the College of Business capstone course. The Business Policy course is a capstone experience taken by all College of Business undergraduate students in their senior year of study. The College of Business has identified the following learning outcomes for measurement in the capstone course: (a) facility in use of business concepts, (b) ability to integrate knowledge across business disciplines, and (c) ability to communicate business analysis in writing. The three management faculty members who teach this capstone course are proposing to develop and assess student performance on these three learning goals using a common case analysis.

Please accept this College of Business pilot study proposal in support of the University’s QEP initiative. The pilot project will provide documentation to SACs concerning the COB’s implementation of assessment and will constitute the first phase of the COB’s assessment plan in preparation for AACSB reaccreditation. Support of this plan will enable the College to gain experience and expertise in developing and field testing its assessment plan and will provide a baseline for providing additional assessment measures. In addition, the College of Business will be in a position to share its experience with the pilot study in this capstone course with other colleges at UWF.

I greatly appreciate your consideration for this proposal.

ER/jp

cc: Dr. Sandra Flake

REC'D DEC 01 2004
MEMO
November 24, 2004

TO: Ed Ranelli, Dean
    College of Business

FROM: Arup Mukherjee, Chairman
       Management and MIS

SUBJECT: Pilot Study on Assessment in the Business Capstone course

The College of Business is undertaking a comprehensive plan to measure student learning in its programs. The College has developed a set of learning goals for its programs and also a tentative plan for measurement of achievement of the goals. In the first phase, the College has identified the following learning goals for measurement: (a) ability to use business concepts, (b) ability to integrate knowledge across business disciplines, and (c) ability to communicate business analysis in writing.

After detailed discussions it was felt that it would be best for the College to implement a pilot program of assessment of these three goals using a common case analysis in the Capstone Business course. The three faculty members who teach the capstone course have now submitted a proposal to develop and assess student performance on the three learning goals using a common case analysis.

The proposal is attached for your use. There are many benefits to this approach. First, this would get the process of collecting data about student performance off the ground. Second, this would enable us to meet our obligations to AACSB about the first phase of assessment. Third, we would be able to learn about the complexities of implementing an assessment plan and share our experience with colleagues across campus. Finally, we would be able to provide evidence to SACS about our progress in implementing an assessment plan.

It seems to me that the proposal is for a very modest sum of money and should be supported by the University. If there are any questions please be kind enough to contact me.
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Pilot Study on Assessment

Grant Proposal

Proposal for Pilot Study of Assessment in Business Capstone Course

Brian Peach
Marty Hornyak
Steven Snyder
Management/MIS
College of Business
Pilot Study of Assessment in Business Capstone Course

The University and the College of Business (COB) have embarked on a comprehensive approach to develop and implement assessment plans for programs. The COB currently does not have an effective and validated device to assess the achievement level of graduating business students. This is a proposal to develop and execute in the Business Capstone course a pilot project to develop a means to assess recently developed student learning objectives in the COB curriculum. Expected benefits of the pilot study are that it will help the COB better understand the challenges of assessment, generate preliminary data that will help the College refine its assessment efforts, and support the development of a valid assessment device.
**Background**

The University of West Florida has undertaken a major project of developing and implementing an assessment plan for its programs. On one hand, this is a requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). On the other hand, the University considers it an opportunity to learn more about the effectiveness of its academic programs and then devise strategies to improve these programs. The University has developed a comprehensive Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to be the broad umbrella for assessing and improving the quality of its program offerings.

Further, the College of Business is also developing a plan to meet the 'Assurance of Learning' standard of AACSB – the international accreditation agency for colleges of business. The College of Business plan is expected to be broad enough to meet the requirements of both the above mentioned accreditation agencies. The College is developing a set of learning goals for the undergraduate business degree, to be followed by a tentative plan for assessment.

All undergraduate students in business complete a capstone course in Business Policy. The policy course is designed to integrate the various business disciplines and provide students with skills in identifying issues facing a firm and developing an appropriate strategy to address those issues and achieve the firm's objectives. A number of pedagogical approaches are utilized in the policy course to help students achieve course goals. One pedagogical approach is the use of a computer simulation where student groups develop strategies to compete against other student teams or computer simulated firms in a business market place.
Another pedagogical approach is a series of case analyses culminating in an individually written case analysis. For the written case analysis, students are required to work independently in analyzing the competitive position of a firm, identifying the strategic issues facing the organization and the development of an appropriate strategy and implementation plan. This case analysis gives students an opportunity to independently demonstrate their understanding of the business disciplines through their analysis and recommendations. Because the capstone course written case analysis is accomplished by all graduating business students, it is a natural setting for developing an assessment device for capturing the level of success of the COB for achieving its learning objectives. Specifically, this individual case analysis provides an opportunity to assess student use of business concepts, integration of knowledge across disciplines and ability to communicate findings in writing.

**Pilot Study**

Although it is straightforward to envisage use of the capstone course for assessment, the implementation is currently confounded because there are three instructors who teach the course. At the present time they use different cases, a different set of instructions, and have different content requirements. Hence, the first tasks are to develop a common case description, a common set of instructions, and common grading criteria. In subsequent step the nature and type of data to be collected would be defined, and the pilot assessment device developed and administered.

An initial review of similar efforts at other institutions, it was found that only a few institutions had promulgated assessment standards. It was also clear that none of these
schools had assessment devices or approaches that would be suitable for adoption at UWF or for the COB. However, there are conferences where discussions and early research findings specific to learning assessment are available. It would be extremely beneficial to the quality of our pilot study and subsequent assessment development to have the investigators attend such conferences and network with the leaders in this field. Attendance at these conferences would enable us to learn more about assessment from professionals in the field and colleagues at other universities who have already implemented assessment plans or are conducting research in this area.

**Proposed Activities**

A. Select common case for written case analysis. [Fall 2004]

B. Develop written case analysis instructions. [Fall 2004].

C. Develop written case grading criteria. [Fall 2004]

D. Implement pilot study using written case analysis criteria and grading [Spring 2005].

E. Collect data on common case analysis [Spring 2005]

F. Evaluate data on common case analysis [Summer/Fall 2005].

G. Attend conferences to learn about pitfalls and challenges of assessment [Spring 2005 and/or Fall 2005].

**Proposed Budget**

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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Student assistants</td>
<td>600.00</td>
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2. Data entry and data analysis 500.00
3. Books and videos on assessment 400.00
4. Professional development – attend conferences to learn about assessment 4500.00

Total 6000.00

**Benefits**

We believe that this pilot study will benefit UWF and the College of Business in many ways as detailed below:

A. The University will be able to provide documentation to SACS about implementation of its assessment plan.

B. The College will be able to meet its obligations to AACSB about implementing the first phase of its assessment plan.

C. The College will gain experience and expertise in developing and field testing its assessment plans.

D. The College will capture data to act as the baseline for initiating additional assessment measures.

E. The College faculty will be able to learn from the experience of the pilot study in the capstone course about the process of assessment.

F. The University will be able to share the experience of the pilot study in the COB capstone course about the process of assessment with other colleges.