

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY
Management Department

I. Programs

The following programs are offered by the Management Department:

- Business & Organizational Security Mgt (MA)
- Health Administration (MHA)
- Health Care Management (MA)
- Human Resources Development (MA)
- Human Resources Management (MA)
- Information Technology Mgt.(MA)
- Management (BA)
- Management & Leadership (MA)
- Marketing (MA)
- Procurement & Acquisitions Mgt (MA)
- Public Administration (MA)
- Space Systems Operations (MS)

While all programs will be assessed over the next five years, we have been focused on two: MA Human Resources Development and MA Marketing. See “HLC3.a_SBT_Assessment_5_Year_Plan.” These programs have been part of the world-wide data collection pilot, and next year we will add our largest program, the MA in Management and Leadership.

II. Assessment of the Programs

The department is committed to Academic Assessment to improve student learning. Faculty have established Program Level Learning outcomes for every program. When it came to establishing assessment measurements, we had a false start by struggling to use the same approaches as the Business Department. Their course content and Program and Course Learning Outcomes were quantitatively and analytically oriented. It took us a while to realize that the Management disciplines with it’s theoretical concepts and models, called for a very different approach to Assessment. We had always understood the difference, in the abstract, but both the Business Department and the Mathematics and Computer Sciences Department had started earlier and their paradigm tended to dominate early thinking on the development of Consistency and Assessment tools. In addition, the Management Department had gone through a series of turnovers in Chairs and this had also helped to slow our progress. In late Fall, 2005, and early Spring, 2006, Program Outcomes for all Management Programs were developed. Each Program Leader then created matrices for all courses in their programs that were matched to the set of Program Learning Outcomes. At that time, our thinking was that each course would be capable of covering at least 1 or 2 of the Program Learning Outcomes. We were planning to develop Assessment tools and rubrics for each course, covering as many PLO’s as the course was capable of measuring. We would start assessing at the 6000, or capstone level; then,

based on early results in St. Louis and the field sites, determine which courses were contributing to deficiencies for each Program Learning Outcome. This would allow us to tap all of the PLO's at the 6000 level and then drill down into individual courses to complete more refined assessments. We would then be in the position to provide detailed feedback to instructors in field and recommendations for emphasizing specific dimensions of PLO's. It seemed, at first like an academically defensible and doable project. We had not anticipated the amount of work it would take for each program and course, but in our action planning, this soon became clear. The number of tools would be immense. Within the Management Department, we had 13 programs (including the Doctor of Management Degree) and only 11 fulltime faculty. As will soon become obvious, we eventually decided to abandon such an ambitious strategy.

In the first pilot assessment within the HRDV 5630, Organizational Development course, in spring, 2006, we development and experimented with our first Assessment tool. This was before we had fixed on the concept of assessing at the 6000 level. In this case we were merely looking for an advanced HRDV course that assessed all of the Program Learning Outcomes. This was the only Assessment tool the Management Department had at that time. The tool consisted of 50 multiple choice questions that were given in class on the last day of class and a case study analysis that students took home to complete after the 8th week of class. It was developed by the Program Leader of the HRDV Program, a Ph. D. in Organizational Behavior/Organizational Development, and a content expert in the field. We decided to adopt a model based on the concept of assessing mandatory topics in each of the Management disciplines. We had piloted this approach in earlier curricular redesigns of the HRMG, HRDV, and Masters of Management and Leadership Programs in 2002-2003. The purpose of "mandatory topics" was to develop consistency in individual courses, no matter where the course was being taught across the world of Webster. Instructors were expected to cover the same key theoretical concept, models, and methodologies, with some freedom to address discretionary topics of their own choice.

The Assessment Coordinator and Program Leader of the HRDV Program decided that the use a multiple choice test to analyze the meaning of mandatory topics was an expedient way of responding to Program Learning Outcome 1: "Students will demonstrate through a written exam their comprehension of the mandatory topics." The case was used to demonstrate performance against Program Learning Outcomes 2 and 3:

2. Students will be able to analyze complex factual situations using the important facts, concepts and theories of the Human Resources Development field to help diagnose best practices, problems, and opportunities for program development.
3. Students will be able to integrate theories and models to develop solutions to complex HRD problems. They will demonstrate the effectiveness of their solutions using either quantitative or qualitative criteria.

For Spring 2, 2006, the Program Leader of the HRDV Program and other St. Louis instructors used the tool to assess their 5630 course sections, The early results indicated the case study had worked well. Instructors were comfortable with it and students were able to demonstrate performance against Program Learning Outcomes

2 and 3. That is, students could take the theories, facts, and concepts they did know to analyze a moderately complex situation and determine what interventions should be employed. They were performed significantly less well in measuring the effectiveness of their solutions. This last was to be expected as we suspected instructors were not yet emphasizing evaluation as a component of organization development, even though the importance of the concept is embedded in our recommended textbooks. (We had not yet modified our list of mandatory topics to include it.) We also suspected that our Webster students, many of whom were working fulltime and had a strong “real-world” orientation, would be capable of applying theory and concepts to moderately complex situations. It is what many of them did in their professional roles everyday. In addition, what this early, very limited data set was telling us, was that students could also synthesize, analyze, and problem-solve using the models they had been taught in class. This was interesting but in no way definitive. We were more concerned in tracking these same results over time to see if the trend held up in the formal assessment schedule for HRDV 5630, section after section and Session after Session.

A second source of feedback was the instructor discomfort with the use of multiple choice tests. A number of the instructors believed that such tests were inappropriate at the graduate level, even though we all knew that the evaluation technique had been used in respected standardized tests like the GMAT. We acknowledged their concerns, but were not ready to drop our standardized approach to this section of the tool. In the process of working with faculty around Consistency and Assessment, we had discovered that both full and part-time faculty were all too ready to insist on the customization of developing their own essay or case tools in order to preserve “academic freedom”; yet when it came to producing these tools against a deadline, it was difficult to get a final product. (This process would be compounded as formal Assessment began to occur at over 100 U. S. sites and 9 international campuses.) Since our mandatory topics were a fairly objective set of concepts and theories, we saw no problem in applying a more objective, though standardized, form of evaluation. Again, with 13 programs, extensive use of customized tools might have proved awkward and unwieldy *for assessment purposes*, no matter how desirable they might have been from the point of view of academic freedom. Nonetheless, both the Chair and Assessment Coordinator determined that for those faculty who insisted upon it, we would allow the development of individual tools that measured performance against the Program Learning Outcomes. These would have to include our criteria for the use of rubrics and address the issue of mandatory topics.

The early interpretations of our results suggested that, most likely, instructors were not teaching to the mandatory topics. Students seemed to be unable to comprehend their meaning. Many of the scores were in the “moderate” to “low” range on the rubric, with very few “good” scores. We suspected that instructors may not have been teaching to the mandatory topics and that therefore, students were not paying enough attention to them. This was another area where we would have to look more carefully at the trends as we moved into the formal Assessment schedule for the course. In addition, it became clear that 50 multiple choice questions weren’t enough to demonstrate knowledge of all the mandatory topics in the course. We found that we were not able to provide instructors

with specific feedback about performance against individual dimensions of mandatory topics. Consequently, we increased the multiple choice examination to 100 questions. We had presented a summative score for all mandatory topics. After reviewing the results, we decided to break-down the multiple choice scores into 9 organization development dimensions that, together, could be scored to measure performance against Program Learning Outcome 1.

Following the pilot administration of the tool, the Assessment Coordinator and the Chair consulted with faculty and decided to use the same model of (1) multiple choice questions and (2) case analysis for 12 of the programs in the Management Department (the Doctor of Management Program being the exception). It was June of 2006, and we were attempting to determine how we could assess of all programs without getting bogged down in the intricacies of instrument creation. We knew there was a limited amount of time available to get all of the programs done. We also decided that for all programs, there was one place where all of the Program Learning Outcomes got evaluated, at the level of the 6000 capstone course. Given limited faculty resources, and the reality that it would probably be the Program Leaders who would be central in the development of the Assessment tool for their program, it made sense to streamline the choice of course where the assessment would occur. The manpower demands of Consistency, Assessment, and Accreditation were pushing us to standardize methodology decisions that were not crucial to assessment of Program Outcomes, while leaving discretion to individual programs in the choice of mandatory topics and case materials. We believe this was a rational trade-off. It would allow us to accelerate our development of Assessment tools and to begin adding programs to the Assessment process in an accelerated manner. By August of 2006, all but one of our academic programs had an Assessment tool ready for use. In all cases, except two, Assessment would take place in the 6000-level capstone course. We had started-out with HRDV 5630 *before* making this procedural decision, and would continue assessing the HRDV program within that course. It was serving our purposes, and we didn't want to add additional work.

In a second case, an early decision had been made in the Fall of 2006 to assess Program Learning Outcomes in the Management and Leadership Program (M&L). In that case, the faculty, Assessment Coordinator, and Program Leader (with the Chair's concurrence) determined that MNGT 5670, Managerial Leadership, would be the place to start. The reason for choosing this course, rather than 6000 (according to our decision rule) was that the Assessment tool for that course had already been created earlier in the summer. It was designed to measure progress against all Program Learning Outcomes for the M&L Program. This tool will be implemented in 2008, in for each session the course is taught.

The Human Resources Development Program - Assessment:

The HRDV 5630 Assessment tool was included in the Formal Assessment Schedule in Fall 1, 2006, and Spring 1, 2007. It is being used again in Spring 2, 2007, and we are now telling all instructors teaching the course to embed it in the course syllabus. Experience has told us that failure to embed leads to an overload on students due to the use of multiple assessment tools at the end of their program, some designed for Assessment, and others created by the individual instructor. We believed that the state of overload would influence student ability to perform on the Assessment tool and could significantly skew the results.

The data for the entire Assessment of HRDV 5630, since we began in the spring of 2006, is somewhat sparse. We made the mistake, we think, of not beginning to assess in every session immediately following the initial pilot, Spring 2, 2006. In addition, we were still dealing with communication and technology problems between the Webster St. Louis Campus and other U. S. and International sites. Until recently, there was no centralized location on the website where instructors could go to download the tool. Instead, they had to deal with a number of decentralized approaches orchestrated by the Directors and Faculty Coordinators. Once they had administered the tool to their classes, there was single point of contact to whom they could send the results. The procedure was evolving, and it was only recently, at the end of Spring 1, that the structure and process of assessment were fully in place for this course. In order to catch-up and to strengthen our data set, we are now asking all instructors who teach this course to assess every time they teach it, and then report the data to our Director of Institutional Assessment, Kathy Marlock. We are doing that for all of our Management programs

The data from Spring 1 indicates that students being assessed in the HRDV 5630 course have gained a fairly good understanding of the basic concepts of Organization Development. They are not as clear on the key interventions within the field and the theoretical models on which these interventions are based. In addition, they seem to be able to apply concepts in the analysis of moderately complex cases, while having more difficulty in applying individual facts of the case to support their conclusions. Finally, they can use applied theory to solve organizational problems, but they have not, as yet learned how to test the effectiveness of their solutions using quantitative and qualitative criteria. All of these findings are being reviewed to order to provide recommendations to instructors to improve student performance against Program Learning Outcomes during the summer of 2007. Both the Program Leader and his local Associate, Darryl Enos, will begin meet in the third week of April, 2007, to further analyze the results and prepare recommendations to the fulltime management faculty for changes to the instrument as well as feedback and recommendations they will provide to the field. Our plan is to meet with the Management faculty at their regular meeting in May and report our results and recommendations. Following that we will work with the Associate Dean and Director of Institutional Assessment to follow-up with specific information to the sites. We hope to accomplish this by summer, 2007 or at the very latest, fall, 2008. Then we will continue to follow through with session-by-session implementation, analysis, and feedback to the

sites to close the loop and track improvements against the Program Learning Outcomes over time.

As noted above, we are currently asking individual instructors to embed this assessment tool into their courses. Students will be graded, at least partially, based on their performance on this examination. This is an incentive for instructors to actually teach to the examination (particularly to the areas of demonstrated deficiency). Also provided is an example of the document itself. It provides one multiple choice test and one case study.

The MA Marketing – Assessment:

MRKT 5960 was on the assessment schedule for Fall 1, 2006, but it was cancelled because there were too few enrollments. In preparing to do the Assessment of the course, Bob had gotten inputs on rubrics for 5960 and Program Learning Outcomes for the MKTG Program from the Regional Academic Group at their meeting. Following the cancellation and taking into consideration other curriculum-related factors, it was decided to offer the course only one time per year. That decision immediately made it necessary to find a different course in which to do the Assessment. Since the Department had decided to move to the 6000 capstone model for Assessment by that time, the MKTG Program decided to assess in their own 6000 level capstone. This is the integrative course that asks the students to integrate marketing concepts and methods around a proposed marketing project. The tool was created in a few months, and data were collected for this course in Fall 2, 2006. It is being collected again in Spring 2, 2007. As noted above, not many Marketing Programs exist within the Webster system, therefore, we plan to use this assessment instrument in every section of the course that is taught within Webster, every session of the academic year.

III. Expected outcomes for students

In Marketing 6000, it is expected that 90% of students will achieve a “high” rating for all learning outcomes. This is the culminating course in the program. By this time, students should have learned the basic concepts and methods of the field.

In HRDV 5630, it is expected that 40% of students will achieve a “good” rating for all learning outcomes. This is the first exposure most of these students will have had to the field. The benchmark then is lower. Once instructors learn to begin teaching to the outcome and related dimensions, we expect to see steady increases in performance. This should begin to occur in the summer and Fall of 2007.

IV. Learning Outcomes Data

The assessment cycle is fully integrated into the administrative structure of the department.

Program Leader Bob Geile has provided documentation of assessment results and initiatives for the Marketing Program. See

HLC3.a_SBT_Assessment_Activity_Report_Marketing_Management_Dept and
HLC3.a_SBT_Assessment_Overview_Plan_Marketing_Management_Dept

Jeff Haldeman, Program Leader of the Human Resources Development (HRDV) Masters Program has provided an overview of the results of the HRDV assessment effort. See the following documents:

HLC3.a_SBT_Assessment_Overview_Plan_HRDV_Management_Dept.doc

HLC3.a_SBT_Assessment_Activity_Report_HRDV_Management_Dept.doc

HLC3.a_SBT_Assessment_Data_Summary_HRDV_5630_Management_Dept.xls

V. Changes to the Curriculum

Changes to the curriculum, based upon the data, will include:

MRKTG 6000 was assessed in Fall 2, 2006. A small amount of data was collected because of the small number of sections offered. Marketing 6000 will be used to collect assessment data again during Spring 2, 2007. As there is insufficient data currently, no changes will be made until such time as there is enough evidence to warrant a specific directional or strategic change in how the Marketing Program is delivered.

The Program Leader and his faculty associate have reviewed initial data from HRDV 5630. They are discussing the possibility of embedding more of the mandatory topics from the course into the case tool. That way students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to understand the mandatory topics (and theories) in an applied context. For those students who may not perform as well with a multiple choice methodology, they will then have the opportunity to perform using a different learning tool. This would actually be in place for the Fall 1 session, 2007.

VI. Future Assessment

Assessment pilots are in place for the following on-ground programs at the St. Louis campuses only: Doctor of Management, M.A. in Information Management Technology, M. A. in Human Resource Management, M. A. in Human Services Management, M. A. in Business and Organizational Security Management, M. A. in Procurement and Acquisition Management and the B. A. in Management (No emphasis) programs. The pilots are focusing on feedback from the instructors in terms of the assessment tools, process and rubrics. We want to make sure that the instructors who are teaching in the courses targeted for program assessment are comfortable with the assessment models that have been developed for their programs before we use the extended site model to begin world-wide assessment data collection. Pilots are also in place for the M. A. in Public Administration and M. A. in Space Systems Operations Management at campus locations outside of St. Louis where those programs are offered.