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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Mean percent correct scores and national percentile rankings in 2014 indicate this target was met. Results are reported for the Coast cohort (n=24). The scores indicate continued improvement in national percentile rankings and are detailed below.

Assessment Indicator 2014 Mean% Correct 2013 Percentile Ranking 2014 Percentile Ranking

Managerial Accounting 54 80% 87%
Finance 47 85% 68%
Management 66 65% 81%
Marketing 65 93% 85%
Strategic Integration 59 83% 83%

Results indicate the performance target of the 60th percentile national ranking was met in all 5 areas assessed. Scores improved in Accounting and Management and remained stable in Strategic Integration. Scores declined slightly in Marketing and more dramatically in Finance. Historically, MBA students (both at USM and nationally) struggle most in the Finance portion of the MBA ETS Major Field Exam. However, the 2014 results provide another year of evidence for the success of the 2009 MBA program revision. These results provide strong external validation for learning
outcomes at the conclusion of the MBA program. All results presented compare our graduating MBA students to over 25,000 MBA students at 260 different institutions.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Assessment results for the Spring, 2014 semester in MBA 610 indicate this target was met. Results are reported separately for the Hattiesburg cohort (n=5) and the Coast cohort (n=17). All students in the Hattiesburg cohort exceeded expectations in Mathematical and Statistical Accuracy (100%); no student met expectations or failed to meet expectations. In the Coast cohort, only 1 student (6%) exceeded expectations and 15 students (88%) met expectations for mathematical and statistical accuracy. One student (6%) in the Coast cohort failed to meet expectations in this assessment indicator. Therefore, the target was met in both cohorts; 100% of the Hattiesburg cohort met or exceeded expectations and 94% of the Coast cohort met or exceeded expectations on this measure in 2014.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Exam questions were not assessed in MBA 660 during the 2013-2014 cycle.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Exam performance in MBA 611 was 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.

**Monitor exam performance in MBA 611**
Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
The professor will continue to monitor exam performance in MBA 611, relative to achieving targets for LO1. The target was almost...
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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
In 2014, the mean composite score on the ETS MBA Major Field Test was analyzed for the Coast cohort (n=24). MBA students achieved a mean score of 257, which is ranked at the 79th national percentile. Therefore, the target was met. The 2014 results compare our MBA students to almost 25,000 MBA students at 260 different institutions who took the same exam. While the average score for the cohort ranked at the 79th percentile, 8 of the 24 MBA students (33%) ranked at the 90th percentile or above on this exam. All 8 students scoring at the 90th percentile or above had significant work experience. For the second year, students with significant work experience outperformed those with no work experience. In 2014, students with work experience (n=17) achieved a mean score of 263, ranked at the 94th percentile nationally. Students without work experience (n=7) achieved a mean score of 243, ranked at the 23rd percentile nationally. While there was a noticeable difference in the two groups, the blended cohort of MBA students appears to elevate the learning experience for the full time MBA students who lack work experience.

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Business plans were not assessed in MBA 605 during the cycle.

M 19: Written case assignments in MBA 600

Case analysis 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 will meet or exceed expectations when demonstrating the ability to conduct a situation audit, define the problem or decision, identify alternatives and address critical issues in written case analyses.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Fall 2013 section of MBA 600 and a Coast cohort of 14 students. Students submitted a series of 5 case analyses over the semester that cover issues related to behavioral management. Assessment results are based on the final case submission. Thirteen students (93%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of concepts and techniques in management, and 1 student (7%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations in the
areas assessed. Therefore, the target was met because 100% of students met or exceeded expectations.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results indicate this target was met and are reported for the Fall 2013 Coast cohort enrolled in MBA 611 (n=18). Students completed 9 individual cases on managerial accounting and financial concepts during the semester and assessments are based on average scores across the 9 cases. Five students (28%) exceeded expectations on case analyses average scores and 13 students (72%) met expectations. No students failed to meet expectations. The professor reports that case analysis performance improved in the Fall of 2013 compared to the Fall of 2011. In the earlier assessment, the professor noted stronger case performance during the face to face class meetings of this hybrid course and weaker performance when cases were submitted electronically in weeks that did not have a face to face class meeting. Performance in 2013, however was consistent during the term whether the class met face to face during the week or not. This cycle's result was much better than the first time the professor taught the hybrid course in 2011 and is attributed to more experience with the hybrid course format and clearer communication of performance expectations on cases during the semester.

**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).

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.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 MBA 620 cohort; all students were enrolled in the Coast section (n=27). Twelve students (44%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of global economic concepts and techniques; 15 students (56%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations in this assessment area; therefore, the target was met with 100% of students meeting or exceeding expectations.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle
An assessment of a comprehensive case study in finance was not reported during the 2013-2014 cycle.

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 semester in MBA 650; the Coast cohort included 25 students. Results indicate this target was met. Sixteen students (64%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of global business system concepts (internet of things, cloud computing and social media usage) and 8 students (32%) met expectations. Only one student (4%) failed to meet expectations for this learning outcome. Therefore, 96% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this knowledge area.

M 29: Knowledge of strategic management concepts and theory
Performance on a strategic management case in MBA 660 will be used to assess knowledge of strategic management concepts, theories and applications.

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

Target:
85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations when applying strategic management concepts and theories in case analysis in the capstone course.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 blended cohort enrolled in the one section of MBA 660, on the Coast (n=24). Students completed 5 case analyses during the semester and the assessment is based on the final case submitted. Results indicate the target was met; 18 MBA students (75%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of strategic management concepts and theories and 5 students (21%) met expectations. Only one student (4%) failed to meet expectations in this assessment. Therefore, 96% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations when demonstrating knowledge of strategic management concepts and theories in case analysis.

M 30: Case Analyses in Financial Management
Case analyses in MBA 640, Financial Management will be used to assess knowledge of financial concepts and theories and creative critical thinking abilities.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric
Target:
85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for knowledge of financial management concepts and theories in case analysis.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Fall, 2013 blended cohort enrolled in the only section of MBA 640, on the Coast campus (n=23). Students completed ten mini-case studies in financial management during the semester; the assessment is based on the average grade earned by each student across 10 different financial management cases. Results indicate the target was met; 16 students (70%) exceeded expectations and 7 students (30%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations; therefore, 100% of MBA students demonstrated knowledge of financial management concepts and theories in this assessment.

M 31: Essays in marketing management
Essays submitted in MBA 605, Marketing Management will be evaluated to assess MBA students’ knowledge of marketing concepts and theories and their ability to creatively apply this knowledge for strategic integration and decision making.

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

Target:
85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations when demonstrating knowledge of marketing concepts, theories and application in written essay assignments submitted in MBA 605.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Fall, 2013 blended cohort enrolled in the only section of MBA 605 on the Coast campus (n=23). Students submitted a series of seven written essays during the semester and the assessment is reported for the 6th essay submitted. Evaluations are based on a multi-part rubric that assessed ability to identify the main issue or problem presented and to develop a complete and clear response. Results indicate the target was met; 21 students (91%) exceeded expectations for knowledge of marketing concepts, theories and applications on the 6th essay submitted and 2 students (9%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations in this assessment.

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle
Leadership and team building skills were not reported in this cycle.
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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle
Leadership skills were not assessed by students during this cycle.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):
For full information, see the Details of Action Plans section of this report.

Monitor performance in leadership and team building
Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Lecture material will be strengthened in leadership and team building in this course, and the faculty member will continue to mo...

M 32: Group presentations in MBA 650
Leadership and team building abilities will be assessed on a group case project presentation in MBA 650, Global Business Systems.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

Target:
85% of MBA students will demonstrate leadership and team building skills in a group case presentation in MBA 650, Global Business Systems.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 blended cohort enrolled in MBA 650, Global Business Systems, on the Coast campus. MBA students worked in groups to complete an assigned case analysis and presentation on e-business and supply chain management; peer and professor assessments of leadership and team building skills are reported. Results indicate the target was met; 10 MBA students in groups (40%) exceeded expectations for leadership and team building skills and 13 students (52%) met expectations. Only one group of 2 students (8%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, 92% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations for leadership and team building skills in this group case presentation.

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Ethical and cultural awareness on a case assignment were not assessed in this cycle.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
During the 2013-2014 cycle, all MBA students completed the mandatory RCR training while enrolled in the MBA program. Therefore, the target was met. The combination of increased emphasis on the importance of RCR training by the MBA Director and improved monitoring by the Graduate School worked to increase compliance with this online training program in research protocol and ethics.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Ability to identify and compare/contrast legal and ethical concepts was not assessed in MBA 640 during the 2013-2014 cycle.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 offering of MBA 650, for the blended Coast cohort (n=25). Fifteen students (60%) exceeded expectations regarding the ability to identify and analyze ethical issues in privacy, information security and social media usage by business; 10 students (40%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations in this learning outcome; therefore the target was met as 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this assessment 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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 semester from the MBA 610 course sections. Results are reported separately for the Hattiesburg cohort (n=5) and the Coast cohort (n=17). In the Hattiesburg cohort, all 5 students (100%) exceeded expectations in written communication skills and 100% of students exceeded expectations in graphic communication skills. No student met, or failed to meet expectations in either area assessed. In the Coast cohort, 13 students (76.5%) met expectations in written communication skills and 3 students (17.6%) exceeded expectations. Only 1 student (5.9%) failed to meet expectations in written communication skills. In the Coast cohort, all students either met (n = 16, 94%) or exceeded (n=1; 6%) expectations for graphic communication abilities. Therefore, the target was met in both the Hattiesburg and Coast cohorts for the two communication areas assessed.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 MBA 660 cohort of Coast students (n=24). The communication skills assessment is based on the final case assignment (out of 5 during the semester). Results indicate the target was met. The vast majority of students (n=22 or 92%) exceeded expectations in these written and oral communication skills and 2 students (8%) met expectations. No students failed to meet expectations in the areas assessed. Assessment results were derived from a communication skills rubric and evaluations of language abilities, adaptation to the audience and context areas of the written case analysis. Therefore, 100% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this assessment.

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle
Oral presentations of business plans were not assessed during this cycle.

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.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the Fall 2013 section of MBA 611 and for a Coast cohort of 18 students. Presentation scores improved over the course of the semester. Students were assessed to have excellent oral presentation skills regarding their use of Powerpoint, the organization of their presentations and the conduct of their presentations using multiple speakers. Eleven students (61%) exceeded expectations and 7 students (39%) met expectations; no students failed to meet expectations. Performance improved over the course of the semester, indicating that both the professor's and the students' evaluations of presentations helped during the course of the term. Therefore, 100% of students met or exceeded expectations and the target was met.

M 19: Written case assignments in MBA 600
Case analysis 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 case analysis skills in MBA 600. Assessment results will be derived from a series of case assignments on specific organizational behavior and leadership concepts.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle
Written communication skills were not assessed in MBA 600 case assignments during the 2013-2014 cycle.

**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).

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring 2014 MBA 620 course and the Coast blended cohort (n=27). The assessment of written communication abilities indicates the target was met; 21 students (78%) exceeded expectations and 6 students (22%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations in this dimension of communication abilities. The assessment of graphic communication abilities also indicates the target was met. Eighteen students (67%) exceeded expectations for graphic communication abilities and 9 students (33%) met expectations; no student failed to meet expectations for graphic communication skills.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 MBA 650 and the blended cohort enrolled in the Coast section (n=25). On the comprehensive written project, 10 students (40%) exceeded expectations for written communication abilities and 14 students (56%) met expectations. Only 1 student (4%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, the target was met as 96% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations for written communication abilities.

**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: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

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

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Not Met**
Findings for the Spring, 2014 ETS administration are reported for the Coast cohort (n=16). 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 67% (n=16) of the 24 MBA students who took the exam. Therefore, the ambitious achievement target was not met in 2014. However, scores for 5 of the students were in the 240 - 247 range. No student was significantly below the median targeted score; all students passed the comprehensive exam based on the individual composite scores.

**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 will...

- **Continue to monitor ETS total score performance**
  *Established in Cycle:* 2012-2013
  Individual student performance on the MBA ETS Field Exam will be continually monitored.

- **Continue to monitor ETS total score performance.**
  *Established in Cycle:* 2013-2014
  Individual student performance on the MBA ETS Field Exam will be continually monitored.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Assessment results indicate this goal was met in MBA 610. Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 semester and are reported separately for the Hattiesburg cohort (n=5) and the Coast cohort (n=17). In the Hattiesburg cohort, 4 students (80%) exceeded expectations in creativity and analytical curiosity and 1 student (20%) met expectations; no student failed to meet expectations in this dimension. Results were similar for the managerial usefulness of the analysis dimension; 4 students (80%) exceeded expectations and 1 student (20%) met expectations. Therefore, 100% of the Hattiesburg cohort met or exceeded expectations in these two assessment indicators.

In the Coast cohort, 1 student (6%) exceeded expectations and 15 students (88%) met expectations in creativity and analytical curiosity. Only 1 student failed to meet expectations (6%) in this dimension. Three students (18%) exceeded expectations for the managerial usefulness of the analysis and 14 students (82%) met expectations; no student in the Coast cohort failed to
meet expectations in this area. Therefore, 100% of the Coast cohort met or exceeded expectations in one assessment area (managerial usefulness) and 94% of the Coast students met or exceeded expectations in creativity and analytical curiosity. Therefore, the target was met in the Coast cohort as well.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 MBA 660 cohort of Coast students (n=24). Students prepared 5 written case analyses during the semester; results are reported for the final case. Results indicate the target was met; 9 students (38%) exceeded expectations in strategic integration, critical thinking and decision making skills and 13 students (54%) met expectations. Two students failed to meet expectations (8%) in this assessment. Overall, 92% of students in the course met or exceeded expectations in these dimensions.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Exam question performance in MBA 611 was not assessed during the 2013-2014 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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results indicate this target was met during the 2013-2014 cycle. Results are reported for a Coast cohort (n=24) which included all graduating MBA students who took the MBA ETS Major Field Test (which also serves as the comprehensive exam for the MBA program). The mean composite score was 257 for the cohort, which ranks at the 79th percentile nationally. Therefore, the target was met.
**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...

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**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results indicate this target was met, and are reported for the Coast cohort of 18 students. Students submitted 9 individual cases during the semester and results are reported based on average performance across the 9 individual cases. Performance was assessed using a presentation rubric and written rubric that evaluated content, organization, depth of analysis and ability to answer questions. Five students exceeded expectations (28%) and 13 students met expectations (72%). None of the students failed to meet expectations on this assessment of creative critical thinking skills.

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**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Fall 2013 cohort in MBA 600 on the Coast (n=14). Thirteen students exceeded expectations on the final case assignment (93%) and only one student (7%) failed to meet expectations when integrating, applying and evaluating business issues in a behavioral management case. Results are reported for the final case analysis completed in the term (one of 5 cases assessed with a 6-part rubric). Therefore, the performance target was met.

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**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**
For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Monitor critical thinking abilities in MBA 600**
*Established in Cycle: 2012-2013*
The professor will continue to emphasize and to monitor learning outcomes in the critical thinking skills of students in the cou...

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**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).

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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 MBA 620 course and the blended cohort enrolled in the
one Coast section (n=27). Assessment results indicate the target was met. Ten students (37%)
exceeded expectations regarding the ability to integrate global economic concepts and to
integrate those economic concepts when forecasting interest rates, exchange rates, inflation rates
and unemployment rates for business decision making; 17 students (63%) met expectations. No
student failed to meet expectations in the areas assessed on the comprehensive country
economic analysis project.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**
Creative critical thinking skills were not assessed on a comprehensive case study in finance during
the 2013-2014 cycle.

**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 (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the Spring, 2014 MBA 650 class and a blended cohort in the Coast section
(n=25). Results indicate the target was met. Eight students (32%) exceeded expectations in
creative critical thinking performance on two cases: low carbon supply chain management and
business intelligence/big data; 15 students (60%) met expectations. Only two students (8%) failed to meet expectations in the cases and concepts assessed on these comprehensive projects. Therefore, 92% of MBA students met or exceeded expectations in this assessment.

**M 30: Case Analyses in Financial Management**

Case analyses in MBA 640, Financial Management will be used to assess knowledge of financial concepts and theories and creative critical thinking abilities.

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

**Target:**
85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for creative critical thinking and decision making skills, demonstrated in case analysis conducted in MBA 640 (Financial Management).

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Fall, 2013 blended cohort enrolled in the only section of MBA 640 on the Coast campus (n=23). MBA students completed 10 financial management mini-cases during the semester and the average grade is used for this assessment, across the 10 cases. The target was met; 12 students (52%) exceeded expectations for creative critical thinking skills in financial management and 11 students (48%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations in this assessment area. Therefore, 100% of MBA students demonstrated creative critical thinking and decision making skills when completing case analyses in financial management.

**M 31: Essays in marketing management**

Essays submitted in MBA 605, Marketing Management will be evaluated to assess MBA students' knowledge of marketing concepts and theories and their ability to creatively apply this knowledge for strategic integration and decision making.

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

**Target:**
85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations for creative critical thinking and strategic decision making in marketing management when submitting written essays in MBA 605.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**

Results are reported for the Fall, 2013 blended cohort enrolled in the only section of MBA 605, on the Coast campus. Students submitted 7 essays during the semester and the assessment is based on the 6th essay. A multi-part rubric is used to assess the student's ability to address and analyze the marketing issue/question and to fully support their strategic reasoning with additional sources and references. Results indicate the target was met; 12 students (52%) exceeded expectations for creative critical thinking and decision making abilities in marketing management essays and 11 students (48%) met expectations on the 6th essay submitted. No student failed to meet expectations in this assessment.

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

**O/O 6: International rankings of MBA program outcomes**

International percentile rankings of MBA student knowledge at the conclusion of the MBA program will be used as the most externally valid Student Achievement Objective for the MBA program. MBA results on the MBA ETS Major Field Exam will be compared to the external results prepared by ETS to assess program achievement over time. This comparison for each year's MBA graduating cohort will show what our MBA students know at the conclusion of their program to more than 25,000 MBA students world-wide who take the same standardized exam at more than 260 institutions.

**Related Measures:**
M 33: International rankings of MBA program
Annually, results on the MBA comprehensive exam (the MBA ETS Field Exam) will be compared to the
total international cohort to compare what our MBA graduates know to more than 25,000 MBA graduates
at 260 institutions worldwide. This externally valid comparison of knowledge in 5 areas critical to MBA
program learning will provide an annual benchmark for our graduates.

Source of Evidence: Benchmarking of learning outcomes against peers

**Target:**
Annually, the percentile ranking for the USM MBA graduating cohort on the MBA ETS Field Exam will
be at least in the 50th percentile internationally.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
Results are reported for the 2014 graduating MBA cohort who took the MBA ETS Field Exam in
late spring of 2014. The exam also serves as the comprehensive examination for the MBA
program. The total graduating MBA cohort at USM was 24 students; students took this exam at
the completion of the MBA program in the capstone course for the program (MBA 660). In 2014
the mean composite score for Southern Miss MBA students was 257. When benchmarking against
the international cohort of more than 25,000 students who took the same exam at 260 different
institutions worldwide, a mean composite score of 257 ranks at the 79th percentile
internationally. Therefore, our Student Achievement Objective measure documents that Southern
Miss MBA graduates are in the top 25th percentile internationally for knowledge at the
conclusion of the degree program. Therefore, the goal of being in the top 50 percent
internationally was achieved and far surpassed.

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

**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.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** Finished  
**Priority:** Medium

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
**Measure:** ETS Mean Composite Score National Percentile Rankings  | **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical
Thinking Skills  
**Projected Completion Date:** 07/31/2012  
**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.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** Finished  
**Priority:** Medium

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
Measure: MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Composite Score | Outcome/Objective: Creative Critical Thinking Skills
Projected Completion Date: 07/31/2012
Responsible Person/Group: MBA Director and GPAC

**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: Finished
Priority: Low
Projected Completion Date: 12/14/2012
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: Finished
Priority: Low
Projected Completion Date: 12/14/2012
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: Finished
Priority: Low
Projected Completion Date: 05/30/2013
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: Finished
Priority: Medium
Projected Completion Date: 05/30/2013
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:** Finished  
**Priority:** Low  
**Projected Completion Date:** 05/30/2013  
**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:** Finished  
**Priority:** Low  
**Projected Completion Date:** 12/13/2012  
**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:** Finished  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Projected Completion Date:** 05/30/2013  
**Responsible Person/Group:** Individual faculty member

**Continue to monitor ETS total score performance**
Individual student performance on the MBA ETS Field Exam will be continually monitored.

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013  
**Implementation Status:** Finished  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
  - **Measure:** MBA ETS Major Field Exam - Composite Score  
  - **Outcome/Objective:** Creative Critical Thinking Skills  
  - **Projected Completion Date:** 06/29/2014  
  - **Responsible Person/Group:** MBA Director

**Monitor critical thinking abilities in MBA 600**
The professor will continue to emphasize and to monitor learning outcomes in the critical thinking skills of students in the course. Minor modifications in lecture emphasis may be helpful.

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013  
**Implementation Status:** Finished  
**Priority:** Low  
**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
Monitor exam performance in MBA 611
The professor will continue to monitor exam performance in MBA 611, relative to achieving targets for LO1. The target was almost met in 2012, so no changes to exam structure are merited at this time.

Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: Low
Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: Exam questions in MBA 611 | Outcome/Objective: Concepts and techniques in all functional areas
  Projected Completion Date: 12/12/2013
  Responsible Person/Group: Individual faculty member

Monitor performance in leadership and team building
Lecture material will be strengthened in leadership and team building in this course, and the faculty member will continue to monitor performance. Although the target was almost met, substandard performance in one group of students was observed.

Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: Low
Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: Leadership Skills Assessment | Outcome/Objective: Leadership and Team Building Skills
  Projected Completion Date: 12/12/2013
  Responsible Person/Group: Individual faculty member

Continue to monitor ETS total score performance.
Individual student performance on the MBA ETS Field Exam will be continually monitored.

Established in Cycle: 2013-2014
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: 08/31/2015
  Responsible Person/Group: MBA Director and GPAC

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?
In the 2013-2013 cycle, the assessment goal was to "over-assess" in MBA courses for a third year. Earlier analysis documents the success of the hybrid course delivery format for the MBA program and the success of a blended cohort (working professional students and students without work experience who are younger). During the 2013-2014 cycle, MBA classes were re-established on the Hattiesburg campus for the first time in several years. There was increased interest in measures from the Hattiesburg sections, compared to outcomes observed in the same classes on the Coast. The results document no real performance differences based on campus or cohort differences. In fact, both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast cohorts continue to become more diverse student populations (based on age, education and work experience) so a blended cohort of student exists on both campuses. The current results continue to document 1) no declines in performance due to a hybrid delivery format, and; 2) success of the blended cohort on both campuses.
The 2013-2014 results continue to document strengths across all Student Learning Objectives, where MBA students met or exceeded target goals in the following areas and MBA courses:

SLO1: Basic Business Knowledge - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 600, 605, 610, 611, 620, 640, 650 and 660 (all 8 required courses in the program).

SLO2: Leadership and Team Building - Target met or exceeded in MBA 650.

SLO3: Cultural and Ethical Awareness - Target met or exceeded in MBA 650.

SLO4: Communication Skills - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 610, 611, 620 and 660.

SLO5: Creative Critical Thinking - Targets met or exceeded in MBA 600, 605, 610, 611, 620, 640, 650 and 660 (all 8 required courses in the program).

For another year, our assessments document continued improvement across the 5 learning goals for the program and provide a fifth year of evidence regarding the success of the program revision in 2009. Results on the 2014 MBA ETS Field Test (our most externally valid assessment indicator) continue to exceed our goals and expectations for student learning that is documented at the conclusion of the MBA program. We continue to use this measure to compare our graduating MBA students to an international population of over 25,000 MBA students at 260 institutions. Our national percentile ranking on the MBA ETS Field exam remains in the top 25% internationally; this year, the graduating cohort’s mean composite score ranked the group at the 79th percentile internationally.

Once again, students with work experience outperformed their younger, less experienced classmates on the exam. While our overall goals were met, we will continue to carefully monitor score differences (between cohorts and campuses) to assess overall program learning outcomes. We will continue efforts to enhance the importance of this comprehensive examination with all MBA students, and especially with younger students who do not have professional work experience.

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

The 2013-2014 assessment results show that continued attention must be paid to the “highest order” student learning outcome in the MBA program; the development of creative and critical thinking abilities that are applied to business decision making. This has been a clear area of focus in the program for several years; earlier assessment cycles showed that when targets were not met, it was generally in this area. The current cycle shows improvement in this SLO, because assessment reports show that we did meet targets. Graduate faculty in the College of Business have made adjustments in classroom approaches to improve this assessment result over the last 3-4 years.

However, when multiple learning outcomes are assessed in the same course the result for SLO5 is always lower than an assessment in another area (i.e. basic knowledge, communication skills, etc.). Fewer students exceed expectations on assessments of this learning outcome. While progress has been made, we must continue to focus efforts in this area.

One assessment in the current cycle resulted in a target that was not met. On the MBA ETS Field Exam, the performance goal is that 85% of MBA students will have an individual composite score above the national median score of 257. We want each MBA student to score in the upper half on this international standardized exam. In the current year, only 66% of the cohort (16 of 24 students) had individual composite scores of 257 or above; eight students scored below the national median. While our goal is ambitious, we will continue to focus efforts in classes and at the culmination of the program to improve individual ETS composite scores for all students. Each year, the faculty members teaching MBA required courses fine-tune learning approaches in the 5 areas assessed on this exam (accounting, finance, marketing, management and strategic integration). The faculty members teaching the capstone course (MBA 660) find additional ways to emphasize the importance of performance on the field exam and these efforts will continue.
Collectively, our assessments need to improve in two SLO’s: leadership and team building, and cultural and ethical diversity. Work is underway in the current cycle to develop new assessments in these two areas. While our pattern of measurement is acceptable, we have not "over-assessed" in these two areas and that is an important goal for the 2014-2015 cycle.

Annual Report Section Responses

Program Summary

The 2013-2014 year was the fifth year of new MBA program requirements. Our assessment results indicate continued improvement in learning outcomes across the eight required courses in the MBA program. For the first year, assessment results indicate our targets were met or exceeded in every course-specific measure. This is a significant improvement over earlier cycles, and reflects a continued maturity in our assessment strategy and execution.

The current cycle included a number of changes to the MBA program itself, that have implications for future assessment activities and cycles. During the year, the Graduate Programs and Assessment Committee proposed a number of changes that would eliminate barriers to MBA program entry, increase the diversity of the MBA student body, and grow enrollment in this valuable graduate program. These proposals were circulated to the leadership and graduate faculty members in the College of Business for appropriate review, discussion and votes. Once approved in accordance with the faculty governance processes in the College, the proposals were submitted to Graduate Council for review and approval. These changes resulted in dramatic enrollment increases and student population changes that are largely beginning in the Fall of 2014. However, most of these changes have assessment implications and we will have to specifically assess for positive and negative effects. Specific changes that may/will have assessment implications for the future include:

1. Accepting the GRE as the admission test, in addition to the GMAT admission exam. Current practice is to convert GRE scores into GMAT scores, which results in a predicted average GMAT score. However, the GMAT score ranges predicted by this methodology are large and the degree of variation is substantial. We will need to review the efficacy of this predictor (GRE) for individual student performance.

2. Waiving the test score for candidates who have previously earned a masters degree or higher in another field. Again, the performance of these students will need to be compared to those who took a predictive entrance exam.

3. Approving on a case-by-case basis a test score waiver based on 5 years of more of significant, progressively responsible (managerial) work experience. While prior assessments show that students with significant work experience outperform those with little work experience, we will need to compare performance in this area as well.

4. Significantly decreasing prerequisites for the MBA program. In prior years, non-business majors were required to take 8 undergraduate courses in business prior to MBA program admission. In the 2013-2014 cycle, prerequisite requirements were reduced to 3 areas: either an undergraduate or graduate course in accounting, finance and statistics. This change eliminated barriers, but also provokes future assessment questions for the program.

Efforts continued in the College to develop online MBA courses during the 2013-2014 cycle. During the year, Graduate Council approved online delivery formats for all 8 required courses in the program. We will begin introducing those online courses in the spring of 2014. This will create another assessment challenge, as we compare learning outcomes in online courses to hybrid or traditional MBA courses. The next cycle will document the beginning of those assessment efforts, and conclusions.

Progress was made with online elective courses during the summer term of 2014. The College of Business piloted two new online business electives: one in Commercial Real Estate Analysis and Valuation and a second in Economic Development. Student response to the new online course option was positive, and initial professor assessments indicate good results in these classes. This is another way the program is evolving to eliminate
enrollment barriers and to offer more options to enrolled students.

The College made more progress on globalization efforts for faculty members and MBA students. MBA students participated in 3 study abroad programs during the summer: British Studies, Panama, and Asian Studies. For another year, MBA student interest and enrollment in these programs increased. These educational alternatives enhance the global knowledge, skills and awareness of our MBA students and better prepare them for new career opportunities in global firms.

The current year evidenced the introduction of the new graduate certificate in Business Foundations (separately reported in WEAVE). This online program helped eliminate barriers to MBA program entry as well. Two of the courses can be used to meet MBA prerequisite requirements for non-business undergraduates. A number of new MBA applicants took advantage of the alternative. The certificate introduction meant that MBA applicants in engineering, coastal and marine sciences, medicine, and atmospheric science were able to complete the foundational coursework necessary to be admitted to the program.

One of the most exciting recognitions for the MBA program occurred in May of 2014. For the second year in a row, the part-time MBA program is ranked in the top 200 programs by U.S. News and World Report. In the 2014 ranking, our program was ranked at #188. In the 2015 ranking year, our ranking improved over 30 spots. The 2015 ranking is #154, a huge improvement and very exciting for all in the College of Business.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives
During the 2013-2014 cycle there were several continuous improvement initiatives for the MBA program that are not linked to the assessment of a specific learning outcome.

1. Removing barriers to enrollment in the MBA program and increasing diversity of the MBA student cohort. During the cycle, the College of Business eliminated several barriers to MBA program enrollment. We decreased the number of prerequisites from 8 undergraduate business courses to three (accounting, finance and statistics) and introduced the new graduate certificate program. Two of the online certificate classes (BA 611 and BA 670) can be used to meet accounting and finance prerequisites. We started accepting the GRE entrance exam in addition to the GMAT exam; it is more common that applicants interested in graduate study have taken the GRE exam, the exam costs less and is given on the USM campus. In addition, free study sessions for the GRE are available through USM libraries. We adopted a policy to waive the entrance exam requirement for any applicant who had previously earned a masters degree or higher, as these applicants have already proven their ability to succeed at the graduate level. We initiated a policy to review and approve (on a case by case basis) entrance exam waivers based on 5 years or more of significantly progressive (managerial) work experience. All of these policy changes make the MBA program more accessible to applicants with undergraduate degrees in business and in other fields. The result of this initiative was a significant increase in MBA program enrollment in Fall 2014; the program almost doubled in size compared to Fall, 2013. The cohort is much more diverse on both campuses, which will lead to a richer learning experience for all students. For the first time, non-business majors make up 40% of the total cohort and their undergraduate degrees come from the sciences, health care, engineering and traditional liberal arts fields. In addition, the majority of the MBA cohort has work experience; 70% of the current MBA students are pursuing the degree on a part-time basis and work full time, and this diversity is present on both campuses. The MBA degree was historically conceived as a graduate program that offered managerial business skills to individuals who did not have undergraduate degrees in business. The quality and diversity of our program is changing, and the program will be stronger because of these changes in the cohort.

2. Efforts to expand delivery methods for MBA classes. During the 2013-2014 cycle, the College of Business made progress with online MBA course delivery. All 8 required courses were approved for online delivery by the Graduate Council, and two new online elective courses were pilot-tested during the summer semester (Commercial Real Estate Valuation and Analysis, and Tourism as Economic Development). Student and professor reaction to the online learning experience were positive. In the Spring, 2015 semester we will offer 2 required MBA courses (MBA 610 and MBA 620) in online and hybrid delivery formats. As our student population diversifies and includes more MBA students who are unable to attend classes on campus, this change should improve program flexibility and lead to further enrollment growth. The plan for the Spring, 2015 term is for the same professors to teach both the hybrid and online courses, to ensure quality and consistency.
Future assessment cycles will include comparisons of learning outcomes across multiple delivery methods.

3. Continue to improve study abroad experiences for MBA students. During the 2013-2014 cycle, MBA students participated in study abroad programs in Panama, Asia and Great Britain. This globalizes our MBA students and faculty members and better prepares them for career opportunities in international business and global firms. The most popular study abroad program for MBA students has been the Panama program, and in 2014 a business professor traveled with the group to Panama for the second time. We want to continue to improve the learning experience in this program and to achieve best practice standards for study abroad credit at the graduate level. During the year, the MBA program director and the faculty member held several meetings with Dr. Daniel Norton, Associate Vice President and director of the Center for International Education. Work is underway to modify and enhance the Panama study abroad experience for our graduate students and participating faculty members.

4. Continued efforts to build a culture of assessment for the MBA program. During the 2013-2014 cycle, three new faculty members began teaching in the MBA program. The MBA Director worked with each faculty member to review the Student Learning Outcomes for the program, prior approaches to assessment, and rubrics available for assessment. Each faculty member provided an assessment report in the current reporting cycle, and work is underway to improve their assessment approaches for the next cycle. In addition, several general faculty meetings were held during the 2013-2014 year to update graduate faculty members in the College of Business on MBA program assessment results. These efforts contribute to a growing culture of assessment for the program, and in the College of Business.