Assurance of Learning Task Force

Annual Report

2009-2010

Task Force Members:

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University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

CBA Assurance of Learning Task Force
Annual Report for 2009-2010 Academic Year, July 2010

Formation of Assurance of Learning Task Force

The Assurance of Learning (AOL) Task Force was formed at the beginning of the Fall 2009 semester. The seven member task force is comprised of instructional academic staff, and probationary and tenured faculty who have a background in assessment.

The task force was given the following charge:

"… to develop systematic and on-going processes to develop, monitor, and evaluate the substance and delivery of the curricula of the undergraduate degree program and to assess the impact of the curricula on learning. Specifically, the task force will:

- ❖ Develop and refine new and existing tools and measurements to directly assess learning.
- ❖ Assess at least two learning goals from the undergraduate program annually.
- ❖ Conform the assessment cycle to AACSB-International standards.
- ❖ Maintain appropriate records to document the processes and evaluations.
- ❖ Prepare an annual summary report (typically no more than 3-5 pages) that will be shared with faculty by email and at college meetings.
- ❖ Make recommendations to the UCC and Graduate Committee for implementation of changes resulting from assessment to effectively "close the loop". "

Additional background information and committee membership is included in the charge letter, which is attached in Appendix 1.

Meeting Schedule

During the fall semester the committee met most weeks on Thursdays, from 8:00-9:00 a.m. During the spring semester the committee changed its weekly meetings to Mondays from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Minutes of each meeting were taken and subsequently published on the CBA webpage.

Developing a Plan/Process

Initially the AOL Task Force began by educating itself about various approaches to establishing an assessment process. It recognized that the design of a systematic approach would need to consider assessment style, timing, and location in the

undergraduate curriculum. In order to facilitate continuous improvement, a procedure for conveying results to faculty must also be devised.   At the same time, the AOL Task Force was aware that during the Fall 2009 semester the CBA Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) was revising the undergraduate curriculum outcomes. This revision would ensure that the outcomes better reflected the current program priorities and that the language of the outcomes articulated the intent and meaning of the objectives more succinctly.   Surveys completed in Spring 2009 by UCC members and by faculty teaching core classes indicated that the outcomes of "Problem Solving" and "Communication" would be least likely to change substantially during the fall revisions.   Therefore, these outcomes, as well as "Competency in the Major", were identified as initial focal points for assessment efforts.

Members used a variety of resources to learn more about AACSB guidelines and assessment practices.   Knowles and Birkeland attended the AACSB Applied Assessment Seminar in October, and Sherony attended the AACSB Assessment Seminar in November.   All members were provided with copies of "Assessment of Student Learning in Business Schools: Best Practices Each Step of the Way", edited by Martell and Calderon.   These resources provided guidance and context to the discussion and decisions made by the AOL Task Force.

The AOL task force explored and discussed multiple approaches to assurance of learning efforts, including course embedded assessment and standardized testing. To this end, the task force: 1) met with an instructor using a simulation in MGT 449, (learning that most of the work which is evaluated is completed in a group format; 2) reviewed the content and reports available from ETS Major Field Test in business; and 3) considered which core classes might be well positioned to conduct course embedded program assessment during the Spring 2010 semester.   After meeting with the faculty potentially involved in these approaches, the decision was made to initially pilot two different approaches for assurance of learning. First, faculty teaching Principles of Marketing (MKT 309) would use a course embedded assignment to address the revised outcome of "Decision Making and Critical Thinking".   They planned to adapt their environmental scan assignment for this purpose. Secondly, the ETS Major Field Test in Business would be piloted in Professor Kuffel's sections of MGT 449 (capstone class) as a final exam. In addition, the AOL task force recommended that the 2010-2011 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee be charged with studying the feasibility of a one credit core capstone course to determine achievement of the undergraduate curriculum outcomes.

The AOL Task Force envisions that eventually sub groups could form around the broad learning outcomes, allowing faculty to focus on their particular areas of interest.   The steering committee for each CBA Curriculum outcome would consist of a task force member, faculty members, and a UCC member.

In January 2010, the revised Undergraduate Curriculum Outcomes were adopted by faculty vote at the CBA meeting (Appendix 2).   At this same meeting, the AOL Task Force presented its progress to the CBA faculty. The task force used the presentation to: convey the essential elements of assurance of learning; propose the plan to pilot a course embedded assessment project in MKT 309 and to administer ETS MFT; and present the proposed timeline for continued course embedded assessment.   The task force received feedback from attendees and felt that significant understanding of the goals and process was achieved by the faculty at the meeting.

Preliminary Assurance of Learning Plan and Timeline

The committee developed a systematic plan and timeline for assessing the newly revised learning outcomes. Each outcome is to be assessed twice within the next five semesters. The following table illustrates the timeline. The plan incorporates activities to close the loop on areas needing improvement. See Appendix 3 for the complete document distributed at the CBA meeting.

Curriculum Outcome	Initial Discussion	Assessment activities	Results and discuss changes	Assess with changes	Results and discuss changes
Decision Making	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011
Communication, Social Responsibility	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
Global Context, Major Competency	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012

Implementing the Plan - Spring 2010 semester

Course embedded assessment of "Decision Making and Critical Thinking"

A course embedded assessment task was delivered in MKT 309 to all students of instructors Chilsen and McDermott.   It addressed two of the objectives identified with the learning outcome "Decision Making and Critical Thinking": 1) Acquire appropriate information to frame business decisions, and 2) Evaluate the potential impact of alternatives.   The task, an environmental scan, was designed by the faculty teaching the course, and viewed as valuable in terms of measuring both course objectives and program outcomes. The task force provided input on the wording of the task, and helped to develop the rubric by identifying specific traits which reflected the program objectives. The rubric was subsequently pretested on several examples of student work

and adjusted to improve reliability. The task was administered as part of the regular coursework completed by the students in MKT 309.   A sample of 25% of student work was randomly selected, and the AOL task force, along with Jeff Kessler (President of the CBA Business Advisory Board) evaluated the results to determine whether or not expectations were met. Each task was reviewed by two people in an effort address inter-rater reliability.   The results were analyzed by trait, demographic characteristics and course history.   The complete analysis of the results can be found linked from the CBA Undergraduate Curriculum Outcomes page under the "Decision Making and Critical Thinking Goal".

When looking at the results of the MKT 309 task to determine critical areas for improvement, the two traits where performance was lowest were the focus of the concern by reviewers.   One of the traits, "Integrates information" was used to measure the outcome "Evaluate the potential impact of alternatives".   It was noted that the difficulty students had with integration could in part be due to the wording of the task. However, there was also a sense that this is truly a concept with which students are having difficulty.   Since the learning objective of "Evaluate the potential impact of alternatives" is broadly recognized as a curricular outcome, and completion of most of core coursework indicated no impact on the student performance, it indicates that there is room for improvement in this area.   Consideration should be given to the following: 1) whether the trait "integration of information" is the best way to measure the ability to evaluate alternatives; 2) whether faculty generally uses language which prompts this effort from students; 3) whether faculty asks students to constructively practice evaluation and integration of multiple variables.

The other trait where students performed poorly was "sources or measures are objective and independent". This was used to measure "Acquire appropriate information to frame business decisions".   Faculty should consider whether this is systematically emphasized in our curriculum.
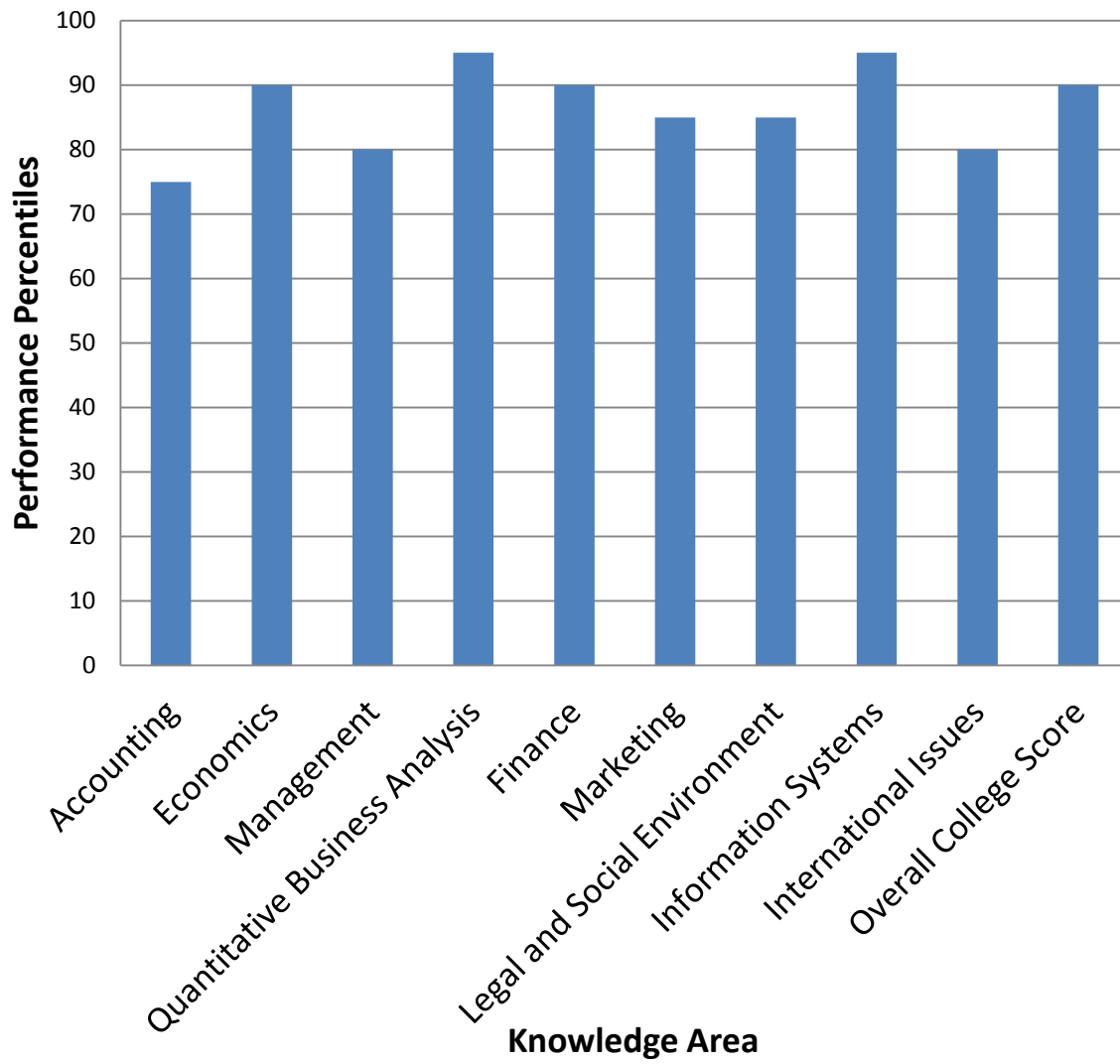
Several areas were identified for improvement in the administration of a course embedded task.   First, in order to facilitate collection of the student work, submission in an electronic format such as D2L should be explored further.   Secondly, when a significant number of non CBA students are taking the course, care should be taken to sample from the CBA pool only, in order to better measure the impact of the program. Finally, as the breadth of course embedded assessment activities increases, the AOL task force may want to evaluate whether the double review of each task is necessary to produce reliable results.

Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test (MFT) in Business

In May 2010, the ETS MFT in Business was administered to 160 students in four sections of the CBA capstone course, MGT 449.   The exam was administered on-line during the final exam period.   The cost of the exam was $24 per student, and ETS provided 20 exams free of charge.   All students scheduled to take the exam appeared and completed the exam.   UW-L had sufficient computer lab facilities and capabilities to minimize difficulties with on-line administration.

The mean score for the 160 students completing the exam was 162. When compared to the institutional mean total score distribution of 618 domestic institutions (August 2006 – June 2009), UWL's mean score was in the 90th percentile ranking. Assessment indicators are generated by ETS for the 9 areas on the exam.   Percentile rankings for each are shown below.

Assessment Traits: Spring 2010 ETS-MFT
CBA students compared to 618 other institutions

The chart "Assessment Traits: Spring 2010 ETS-MFT — CBA students compared to 618 other institutions" plots Performance Percentiles (y-axis, 0–100) against Knowledge Area (x-axis). Bar values:

Knowledge Area	Performance Percentile
Accounting	75
Economics	90
Management	80
Quantitative Business Analysis	95
Finance	90
Marketing	85
Legal and Social Environment	85
Information Systems	95
International Issues	80
Overall College Score	90

Analysis of these results will be considered by the AOL Task Force in the Fall 2010 semester. Particularly, the Task Force is interested in understanding if the departments feel ETS results can be used for measuring "Competency in the Major".

Planning for Fall 2010

During the spring 2010 semester, the AOL Task Force, in keeping with its preliminary course embedded assessment plan, contacted instructors in core classes that address the social responsibility and communication outcomes to discuss their participation in programmatic assessment. Instructors of three core classes were approached about measuring the "Social responsibility" outcome during the Fall 2010 semester: MGT 308, MGT 393, and BUS 205. The instructors of MGT 308 and MGT 393 met with the AOL

Task Force and presented their preliminary ideas for a course embedded task. These will be finalized early in the Fall semester.   BUS 205 also has some options to measure this outcome; however there are likely to be significant changes in the instruction of this class, so this effort may be better pursued during a different semester.

The discussion around communication outcomes was extensive.   An effort was made to seek assistance from faculty in the Communications department and the English department regarding viable measurements of communication.   We were not able to identify a rubric for the common outcomes from ENG 110, which is a required class for CBA majors.   As the AOL Task force struggled to define an approach to assessing this outcome, it finally concluded that it was unclear what traits were essential to define the objectives as articulated.   As a result, assessment efforts at this time might be misguided.   Dr. Bryan Kopp at the Center for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) was contacted, and will work with the AOL Task Force on developing a Communications survey.   The hope is that this survey will better define the particular aspects of communication that matter to CBA faculty, as well as identify where each of these aspects is addressed in the curriculum.   The hope is to launch this survey in September 2010 after the college meeting.

Conversations with Assistant Professor Haried in the Information Systems (IS) Department identified that IS 220 is being revamped during the summer, and one proposal is to create discussion sections with common assignments.   One of these assignments could involve technology and communication.   If it does, this aspect of communication could be evaluated in Fall 2010.

Concurrent AOL Task Force Activities

- ➢ Communication with Stakeholders:
    - Regular updates were provided to the CBA Steering committee (deans and chairs), and feedback was solicited.   In addition, meetings with department chairs and other faculty members were held upon request.
    - The CBA Business Advisory Board was updated and assessment feedback was solicited at their fall and spring meetings.
    - The CBA Student Advisory Committee was updated and feedback about AOL activities was solicited in April 2010.
    - The Fall and Spring college faculty meetings provided a framework for heightening awareness and understanding of assessment and assurance of learning activities. Most of the January 2010 meeting was devoted to the revision of the undergraduate learning outcomes and assurance of learning.   Presentations were made by the six faculty members who are members of the AOL task force, as well as two faculty facilitating the course embedded assessment and ETS MFT that was planned for the spring.

- ➢ Minutes of all AOL meetings were published on the CBA website.

- ➢ The AOL Task Force received and reviewed a report on the assessment of the MBA learning outcomes.

- ➢ The AOL Task Force worked closely with the CBA UCC to provide feedback on the revisions of the Undergraduate Curriculum Outcomes and the implication of those changes on assurance of learning.

- ➢ In order to help departments prepare for assessment of "Competency in the Major", the AOL Task Force requested that each department file the learning outcomes which define competency in their major with the Dean's office.   This will position departments well for discussions in Fall 2010 around how to measure this competency during the Spring 2011 semester.

- ➢ The AOL Task Force met with the Institutional Research Department and determined which student information to obtain from Institutional Research in order to analyze the results of the spring course embedded assessment. Demographic information and course history information were requested.

- ➢ Secure data storage needs were identified and the university Instructional Technology Division provided secure and accessible server storage for the collection and analysis of all AOL data.

➤ Following the adoption of the revised Undergraduate Curriculum Outcomes, revisions were made to the Undergraduate Curriculum map.

AOL Task Force Recommendations

➤ The AOL task force discussed the pros and cons of a one credit class used for assessment. They recommend that the Dean charge the UCC with considering this option.

➤ The Digital Measures data collection system could be used to recognize college level assessment activities as uniquely important.

➤ Assurance of learning activities need to become more visible on the CBA web page.

➤ Faculty should include links to core course objectives and CBA curriculum outcomes on syllabi.

Charge Letter

UNIVERSITY *of* WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

August 28, 2009

To: College of Business Administration

From: Bill Colclough, Dean, College of Business Administration
        Bruce E. May, Associate Dean, College of Business Administration

RE: Appointment of Assurance of Learning Task Force

The College of Business Administration takes pride in its students, faculty and programs. In order to maintain a high quality learning experience for our students and comply with AACSB International accreditation standards, it is vitally important that program learning outcomes are articulated and processes are in place for the college to measure its level of success in accomplishing these educational goals.

AACSB International standards state that "each degree program should be systematically monitored to assess its effectiveness and should be revised to reflect new objectives and to incorporate improvements based on contemporary theory and practice." Under the AACSB definition of a "program", the CBA has two programs, the undergraduate bachelor's degree program and the graduate MBA program.

AACSB International also states that the outcomes assessment process should include:
1. Definition of student learning goals and objectives
2. Alignment of curricula with the adopted goals
3. Identification of instruments and measures to assess learning
4. Collection, analyzing, and dissemination of assessment information, and
5. Using assessment information for continuous improvement including documentation that the assessment process is being carried out in a systematic, ongoing basis. (AACSB Assessment Resource Center, 2007)

Up to this point, the CBA has relied on the faculty, departments, college committees, and the dean's office to monitor and engage in course, major and program assessment. However, the Dean and the CBA Steering Committee[1] believe the formation of an "Assurance of Learning Task Force" to conduct the undergraduate program level assessment will provide a more

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[1] The Steering Committee consists of all CBA department chairs, all CBA directors, the dean, and associate dean.

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cohesive and efficient process to ensure that systematic monitoring of program level effectiveness is taking place.

The Task Force will be responsible for AACSB Assurance of Learning compliance for the CBA undergraduate program with a focus on steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the AACSB outcomes process listed above. Because individual majors, minors and concentrations within the undergraduate program are not considered separate degree programs, the assessment of learning within specific majors and courses will continue to be the primary responsibility of the appropriate CBA committees, departments and individual faculty members. However, it is recognized that because the goals of majors and courses align with the CBA program goals, some assessment tasks may overlap.

Scope of Duties

The Task Force will aid the curriculum management efforts by assessing the undergraduate program learning goals and providing evaluation and feedback. The graduate learning outcomes will be evaluated by a separate process. The CBA departments, faculty, and the Undergraduate and Graduate curriculum committees will retain the curriculum management tasks and authority.

Charges

The charge is to develop systematic and on-going processes to develop, monitor, and evaluate the substance and delivery of the curricula of the undergraduate degree program and to assess the impact of the curricula on learning. Specifically, the task force will:
- Develop and refine new and existing tools and measurements to directly assess learning.
- Assess at least two learning goals from the undergraduate program annually.
- Conform the assessment cycle to AACSB-International standards.
- Maintain appropriate records to document the processes and evaluations.
- Prepare an annual summary report (typically no more than 3-5 pages) that will be shared with faculty by email and at college meetings.
- Make recommendations to the UCC and Graduate Committee for implementation of changes resulting from assessment to effectively "close the loop".

Guiding Documents

The guiding documents for the Task Force are the university and CBA mission, CBA learning objectives and goals, the AACSB Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation, the AACSB White Paper "AACSB Assurance of Learning Standards: An Interpretation" and related documents.

<u>Timeline</u>

The Task Force will assume their duties commencing with the Fall 2009 semester. For reference purposes the next AACSB accreditation visit is scheduled for the 2012-2013 academic year. The CBA mission was revised in 2005, the CBA objectives were revised in 2008. The CBA undergraduate curriculum goals are currently undergoing revision and are expected to be finalized by January 2010.

<u>Task Force Membership and Terms</u>

The task force will consist of members appointed by the Dean in consultation with members of the Steering Committee. To facilitate a sustained process, the term shall be three years. The task force will consist of a mixture of instructional academic staff, probationary and tenured faculty who have a background in assessment and have the interest and energy to take on this important responsibility and make it successful. Equal representation from all departments is not considered material to the formation of the task force, as the task force will focus on the overall undergraduate program learning goals and not on major, department or specific course learning goals. A minimum of two members will be required to attend the AACSB assurance of learning workshop. Very strong efforts will be made to fund attendance for all members.

The Task Force members are:
- Kathryn Birkeland-Assistant Professor, Economics Department
    - Economics Department Assessment Committee
    - General Education Economics Assessment Committee
- Jim Finch-Professor, Marketing Department
    - Internet MBA Assessment Committee
    - Member of ad hoc assessment committee for the MBA program.
    - Instructor: BUS 790 Assessment
- Betsy Knowles-Senior Lecturer, Economics Department
    - Attendee at AACSB Assurance of Learning workshop
    - Economics Department Assessment Committee
    - General Education Ad Hoc Assessment Committee
    - CATL Advisory Group
    - SOTL grant recipient
- Tom Krueger-Professor, Finance Department,
    - Chair of Graduate Committee
    - Member of ad hoc assessment committee for the MBA program.
- Kim Lyons, Lecturer, Accountancy Department
    - Department of Accountancy Curriculum Committee
    - Coordinator of ACC 221
- Bruce May, Associate Dean and MBA Director.
- Keith Sherony-Task Force Chair
    - Chair of the Economics Department

Please provide you full support and cooperation to the Task Force in order to make the assessments efforts successful.

APPENDIX 2

Undergraduate Curriculum Outcomes*

Communication - the ability to convey information and ideas effectively

Upon completion of the CBA undergraduate program students will be able to:
- Deliver effective oral presentations
- Create well-written business reports
- Use communication to work effectively with others in a business context
- Use communication technologies and tools professionally and appropriately
- Adapt communication style to diverse audiences.

Decision Making and Critical Thinking – the ability to evaluate alternatives and understand the ramifications of those alternatives within a given business context

Upon completion of the CBA undergraduate program students will be able to:
- Identify problems
- Acquire appropriate information to frame business decisions
- Develop alternative approaches or solutions
- Evaluate the potential impact of alternatives

Global Context of Business – the ability to integrate global perspectives in business decisions

Upon completion of the CBA undergraduate program students will be able to:
- Recognize the role of cultural diversity in business decisions
- Analyze the global impact of political, social, economic, and legal issues on business decisions

Major Competency - proficiency in the primary functional area of study

Upon completion of the CBA undergraduate program students will be able to:
- Understand current business practices in the primary functional area
- Apply functional area concepts and decision-making techniques and tools appropriately
- Incorporate concepts from other functional business area into the primary area

Social Responsibility - the ability to consider the effects of business decisions on the entire social system

Upon completion of the CBA undergraduate program students will be able to:
- Demonstrate an awareness of social and ethical responsibilities
- Recognize the importance of standards of ethical business conduct
- Recognize and analyze the ecological, social, and economic implications of business decisions

*Developed by faculty with input from students, alumni, and business community. Adopted by faculty vote on January 21, 2010.

APPENDIX 3

Preliminary Assurance of Learning Plan

Timeline

Curriculum Outcome	Initial Discussion	Assessment activities	Results and discuss changes	Assess with changes	Results and discuss changes
Decision Making	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011
Communication, Social Responsibility	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
Global Context, Major Competency	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012

Who coordinates the assessment?
Program Outcome Groups

How and where do the activities occur?

All core courses and classes with BUS prefix. Any pre-core classes may also participate.

Initial course embedded assessment tasks (may need to revise to reflect revised outcomes):
    Decision Making:
        Spring 2010 (MKT 309)
        Spring 2011 (MKT 309 and FIN 355 and MGT 449)
    Communication:
        Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 (MGT 449 and BUS 230)
    Social Responsibility:
        Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 (MGT 308 and MGT 393 and BUS 205)
    Global Context:
        Spring 2011 and Spring 2012 (MGT 308 and MGT 393)
    Major competency:
        Spring 2011 and Spring 2012 (Determined by each Department)

Additional options include: standardized exam, one credit module, and other suggestions

Cont.

Disseminate results and turning information into action:
- CBA college meeting – feedback loop should include pre-core classes
- Assurance of Learning ½ day workshop with breakout groups
- Web page updates
- Report to Chairs, SAC, and CBA Advisory Board at least once a semester.
- Updates about grants and CATL opportunities.
- Coordination between AOL Task force and UCC