Integrated Business Core
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Overview
The program required students to enroll in a designated section for three of their CBA core classes:
- Finance 355
- Marketing 309
- Management 308

Program Design
Participants - Students interested in the Integrated Core must enroll in the Integrated Core and meet the following criteria:
- GPA of at least 3.0
- Recommendation from a current CBA faculty member

Integrated Knowledge
The integrated nature of the projects offered a unique experience for students, allowing them to apply concepts learned in various courses.

Rational
The idea of an "integrated core" pilot stems from different sources. Internally, students were asking for more applied experiences in the curriculum. Facultyrossviewed student interest in working on soft skills and professionalism. Students in the Integrated Core stated that they would like to see more integration of soft skills and professionalism.

Course Design
The Integrated Core utilized an integrated, project-based learning approach. Students covered the traditional content in marketing, management, and finance, but instead of doing three separate, discipline-specific projects (i.e., a marketing plan), the Integrated Core required student teams to complete three integrated projects incorporating all of the subject areas.

The main emphasis of the program, and its integrated nature, rested in the course projects. Students completed a series of three projects over the semester. These projects required students to apply their knowledge from all three courses to make a successful project – to see the interdisciplinary nature of business. Moreover, the projects build on one another, with Project 1 being an industry analysis and Project 2 being a feasibility study for a company in the industry used in Project 1. Thus, the students needed to continue to apply their knowledge and use feedback on both content and quality for Project 2. The final project was a client-based project.

Benefits
The Integrated Core pilot was successful, but not without areas of improvement. Indeed, many students reported the program was far more work than anticipated; however, at the end of the program they realized how much they had both learned and grown professionally, which made the time and effort worthwhile. Additionally, several students emailed in the following spring and summer to reiterate how much they now realized they learned and how the integrated core was currently helping them in their jobs and internships.

Challenges
From a content and timing standpoint, fitting the standard course content in along with the additional critical thinking and professionalism modules was challenging.

Moving Forward
To address these challenges, an additional three-credit seminar course will be added to the Integrated Core in Fall 2014. This course will be team-taught with all three instructors—providing ample time to introduce the additional professionalism and critical thinking modules without altering the pace of the discipline-based lecture. Moreover, the breadth and depth of the professionalism modules can be expanded.

Of Special Note
This project would not be possible without the support of the Provost's Office, CATL, Deans May and Knowles and our respective department chairs and ADAs. Many thanks to all of them.