Assurance of Learning Steering Committee Minutes

First meeting: October 3, 2013

Members Present: S. Scott, Chair; D. Fischer, V. Manlow, M. Grayson, H. Friedman

Members Absent: S. Williams (moving)

I. Aim of the meeting: to determine the role of this committee

- S. Scott noted that a business"core" for all programs must be created as AACSB.
- AOL committee will discuss core courses, not major courses.
- Committee will identify/recruit course coordinators to help develop a business core curriculum.
    - Course coordinators currently exist for multi-section courses. S. Scott recommends that their role be documented. Send S. Scott a list of all course coordinators.
    - Coordinators should collect and store syllabi for all sections in a central location, probably the School of Business (Dean's office).

II. Current status of departmental requirements: Is there anything like a business core?

- FBM is currently the only department with a business core.
- Accounting majors' entire required curriculum for public ACT comprises Accounting courses.
- Accounting and Economics may need to give up some courses in the major curriculum to accommodate business core.
- Economics majors currently take stats, micro/macro, and Accounting 1—these would be in core.
- Economics delivers two of the above courses to other departments but does not take any courses from them.
- Some core courses will merge with the general education requirements (e.g., Econ 1 fulfilling a Social Sciences requirement).
- H. Friedman noted that Economics has room for 12 more credits (Econ has 36 credits in major; some other departments in college have 48).
- If Economics chooses to have an accredited BBA, it would move a business core into its requirements, so it is primarily a business degree and secondarily an economics degree.
- Courses may need to be added to the curriculum, e.g., operations management, finance, MIS, research methods, capstone course. FBM 4100 or 4200 (writing- intensive version of 4100) currently serve in place of the latter two courses.

II. To develop core, we will start with learning goals, not courses.

- AACSB is looking for all business graduates to have a basic knowledge of business and its functions, and a common skill set for success, including communications ability and ethical decision making.
- To determine how close we are to this goal, we must examine the syllabi.

- o Course coordinators will need to gather syllabi from all professors, preferably electronically, although administrative staff should print out one copy to have available.
- o Faculty could be asked to bring syllabi to first department meeting.
- Coordinator will help AoL committee create a common syllabus for the course.
- Ideally, syllabi across the School will use a common format.
- Learning goals should be included on the syllabus.
  - o Faculty will discuss what courses offer opportunities to master particular learning goals; curriculum committee can review this input.
- Course coordinators will work with faculty to assure that learning goals are being met.
  - o Course coordinators should be aware of what is happening in each section.
  - o This issue should be added to curriculum committee meeting agenda.
  - o Large number of adjuncts is a problem because chairs do not have enough time to monitor them. Adjuncts may not be able to cover common topics, depending upon their skill sets.
- Over time, a common text and common exams for all sections may be implemented. (Differences in the classroom will be a matter of emphasis, not content.)
- Common assessments will not occur right away.

III. AOL committee progress

- Last year's committee, chaired by Joshua Fogel, made four recommendations of skill proficiencies expected of all graduates of the School of Business: written communications skills, ethical awareness, information literacy, and diversity awareness.
  - o There was little dissension on these learning goals, which will be reviewed/discussed at All-School Meeting on Oct. 17th, devoted to AOL.
  - o H. Friedman mentioned that Baruch's experience was that the more learning goals you have beyond four, the more problems you encounter. Some goals cost a lot or require outside consultants to implement.
  - o S. Scott noted that Baruch achieved accreditation many years ago; standards have changed since then and the school is highly unlikely to gain accreditation based on only 4 goals.

IV. Tasks for Fall Semester

- Refine goals. Bring faculty into the conversation on how to operationalize the goals.
- Develop case studies for ethics and diversity. Initially start in FBM 4200. Collect writing samples from the Fall semester of this writing-intensive course, to show faculty at department meetings after the Winter break, and get their recommendations about what needs to be done for improvement.
  - o AACSB will want to know where in the course the students had the opportunity to develop writing skills.

- Final assessments of student skills (as in capstone course) need to be backed by skills assessments earlier in the program.
- H. Friedman: Written communication is the hardest issue; don't put burden of teaching writing on business faculty, especially in large enrollment classes; this should be in the college core.
- S. Scott: Graduate assistants can reduce the burden by grading papers, or we can have a Business Writing course in the core business requirement. AACSB mentor can help with this (coming in January to meet with Provost and President as well as the Dean).

- Keep Assurance of Learning on the agenda of every department meeting and curriculum committee meeting (standard agenda item).
- We must map the curriculum, as in the sample shown in the handout. This map will be helpful for departmental curriculum committee decision making.
    - Discuss in curriculum committee meeting what should be added to the list of learning goals. Compile and winnow for discussion at November All-School meeting.
    - When you get the data for the curriculum map, figure out where in the curriculum you can introduce different levels (i.e., introduce, reinforce, emphasize) of a learning goal concept. Then implement this plan in the syllabus, which will reveal where you have gaps in coverage.
    - S. Scott will work on the map—needs syllabi quickly. The map will be given to faculty.
- AACSB supports experiential, project-based learning (active, not passive), like internships.
    - Find out how many projects the average business student is involved in.
    - How many internships does the average student have before graduating?
    - The statistics will show where corrective action is needed, usually in the form of additional resources.

V. AOL committee members will give a report to their departments during next departmental meeting. Faculty engagement with the process will be key toward making the changes necessary for accreditation.