Academic Program Assessment Plan
Undergraduate Programs
Hasan School of Business
CSU-Pueblo

Identification
This is the assessment plan for undergraduate programs at the Hasan School of Business (HSB) at Colorado State University – Pueblo (CSU-Pueblo). The plan was developed in 2010 by Brad Gilbreath, updated by him in 2018, and updated again in 2019 by Brad and Aun Hassan. The contact entity for this plan is the HSB's Assurance of Learning (AoL) Committee. The HSB's graduate programs comprise a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) offered in Pueblo as well as an online program.

Mission, Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
What is the mission of the department and how does it relate to the school's mission?
The mission of the Hasan School of Business at Colorado State University – Pueblo is "We transform students, innovate in teaching, conduct ourselves with professionalism, and engage with and positively impact our stakeholders."

A key part of the HSB's mission is to have positive transformational effects on students. The HSB and CSU-Pueblo serve students from a broad spectrum, including many from lower socio-economic strata, under-represented populations, and first generation students. Our most important task at the HSB is effecting positive change in our students so that they are prepared as business professionals. We build student skills through active learning, experiential education, and collaborations with businesses and community members. HSB graduates are a critical component of Pueblo's economic infrastructure, while many make contributions in other cities, states, and countries.

What are the student learning outcomes and how do they relate to the program's mission?
For undergraduate students, the HSB's five learning outcomes are that students will be able to
- communicate effectively;
- analyze problems and develop solutions;
- apply global business concepts;
- recommend ethical alternatives and appropriate actions; and
- demonstrate effective team skills.

Although we will continue to monitor whether our learning outcomes are what is needed to achieve our mission, our current thinking is that the outcomes support what we are trying to achieve in terms of preparing our students to be successful business professionals.

Are learning outcomes written as observable skills and abilities?
All of the HSB's learning outcomes are observable.

Are the outcomes discrete (i.e., non-overlapping)?
The five undergraduate learning outcomes are discrete and orthogonal.

Are the outcomes limited in number to five or six but not more than eight?
The HSB currently has five undergraduate learning outcomes. We believe these are currently sufficient. As we determine how to achieve student mastery on all the outcomes, we may consider adding more outcomes to address important goals we have for our graduates.

What are the performance criteria?
When assessing student performance on a particular learning outcome, we rate whether the student—on the artifact we are evaluating—exceeded, met, or did not meet the learning sub-goals being assessed with that artifact. The actual criteria for evaluating the level of performance (e.g., *exceeds, meets, does not meet* expectations) are specified in a rubric. For example, for the undergraduate learning outcome *our students will be able to analyze problems and develop solutions*, one of the measurable objectives (or sub-skills) is *development of recommendations*. The rubric entry for *exceeds expectations* for this sub-skill is "makes viable recommendations supported by appropriate analyses."

What level of performance is expected of students for each criterion?
For each criterion, we expect that at least 70 percent of our undergraduate students will meet or exceed the learning objective.

How are the learning outcomes communicated to department faculty and students, and to the community?
A primary way of communicating our learning outcomes is on the HSB website. Once at our website, the learning outcomes are easily accessible by clicking on "About Us" and then on "Assurance of Learning." The HSB's learning outcomes assessment is described in the CSU-Pueblo Catalog. In addition, our learning outcomes are discussed with and approved by the HSB Board of Advisors. Some faculty incorporate a discussion of how their courses relate to program learning outcomes into their syllabi. Students are introduced to assessment, assurance of learning, and our learning outcomes in BUSAD 101, *Business Careers and Opportunities.*

Curriculum
Do the courses and their objectives, in aggregate, meet the outcomes for the program?
We answer this question by reviewing our curriculum map using a two-step process. First, we look for gaps in the map (i.e., outcomes that are not addressed in at least one course). Second, we examine the levels at which each outcome is addressed. It must be determined if there are sufficient opportunities through which students can build related skills. For example, is the outcome "introduced" in student assignments in 200-level courses, "developed" in 300-level courses, and "mastered" at the 400 level? For more difficult-to-acquire skills, are there several courses that address the outcome at the "developing" level?

During 2018 we conducted a curriculum-mapping process and review of the resulting map.

Does the curriculum provide opportunities for students to demonstrate they have learned the program outcomes?
The HSB's undergraduate curriculum maps indicate that faculty require students to demonstrate each of the learning outcomes and sub-goals in our core courses required of every business major. Artifacts of student learning include exams, papers, presentations, and case studies.

Assessment Methods
What assessment methods will be used to measure each of the learning outcomes?
The HSB primarily uses an embedded assessment approach. Artifacts of student work pertinent to a particular learning outcome are collected, and these artifacts are evaluated by faculty external to the course in which the artifact was collected to determine students' level of mastery. Whenever possible we assess individual student's work rather than group projects. Each learning outcome has been broken down into sub-skills, or "measurable objectives," that are components of the overall learning objective. Students' level of mastery is assessed using rubrics developed for this purpose. To ensure inter-rater reliability, we have implemented processes whereby raters meet before and after artifacts are assessed. In addition, for follow-up (loop-closing) activities on subsequent artifact evaluation, the same raters will be utilized, when possible, for consistency and reliability.

Are descriptions of the assessment processes clear and detailed?
Before 2009, creating clarity for the overall assessment process and where the HSB stands on each learning outcome was a challenge. Since then we have developed a variety of documents that make the process much clearer. For example, for each learning outcome, we now have a summary document (i.e., dashboard) encapsulating what we have learned about student performance, actions taken to address shortcomings, results of those interventions, and the next planned assessment. We created a curriculum map that clearly communicates the level of exposure students receive relative to each learning outcome in our core courses. And we have an artifact review procedure that specifies what both the AoL Committee and artifact assessors should do before, during, and after assessments.

Are the assessment processes explicitly linked to the student learning outcomes?
All of the HSB's assessment processes are explicitly linked to the student learning outcomes, with the exception of the Educational Testing Service Major Field Test (MFT). The MFT provides insight into our students' knowledge of nine core business subjects. The results can be compared to external benchmarks (scores from other business schools). Anytime our students score substantially lower than the national average on a subject, we brainstorm how to improve. For example, one action we have taken was creating sample questions in each subject (based on past tests) so that students could be better prepared in subjects that they had taken a few years earlier.

There are challenges associated with using the MFT. It is difficult to get students to take it seriously as they know it is not linked to grades or graduation.

Are the means of assessment commensurate with the available resources?
Keeping assessment to a maintainable level of effort while achieving clear insight into what our students are learning (and not learning) is our goal. Assessment work does, at times, contribute to role conflict and role overload for faculty members because time spent on assessment detracts from that available for other important demands (e.g., research). We continue to work to develop ways to streamline our assessment processes, making them more efficient, and also to spread assessment work more evenly rather than engaging in spurts of activity prior to accreditation visits.

What timetable will be implemented for each method, who is involved, and who is responsible for them?
We have developed a timetable to assess each of our learning objectives every two to three years. Learning outcomes for which student performance was deficient may be assessed in a year-and-a-half to two years, while outcomes for which student performance has met expectations for the last several assessments may be scheduled for assessment in three years. All faculty are involved in assessing student performance, drafting action plans and implementing the action plans. The assessment process is coordinated by the AoL Committee, which is composed of HSB faculty. Overall responsibility for assessment rests with the Dean.

Are multiple methods employed?
The HSB uses multiple methods to assess student learning. Foremost, direct measurement is utilized whereby individual artifacts are gathered in various courses and then evaluated by faculty members. Actions are then designed in response to results and patterns. The MFT is also used as a measure of student learning, and it gives us benchmark data we can use to compare ourselves to other business schools. We are considering how to effectively make use of indirect assessment to complement what we learn from our other methods.

What is the policy regarding assessing team projects versus students' individual work?
We can gain a better understanding of student performance by assessing artifacts of individual students' work rather than team-produced work. Whenever possible, it is our policy to assess individual work. In the rare instances where we assess team-produced work, there will be a good reason for doing so.

Are sufficient direct measures of student learning utilized?
The HSB utilizes direct-assessment methods as a primary source of evaluation. Our judgments about whether students are meeting our learning objectives are based exclusively on faculty evaluations of artifacts of student work from our courses.

Can these methods also be used for accreditation purposes?
Because our accrediting agency, The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), requires rigorous assessment of student learning, the processes described in this Assessment Plan are helpful in maintaining the HSB's accreditation with the AACSB.

How are students involved in the assessment process?
Currently, student involvement in assessment processes is minimal, though we plan to implement activities aimed at increasing student awareness. Some of the HSB's faculty are discussing AACSB and AoL in respective courses to increase student awareness. Additionally, the HSB's learning objectives are reviewed by the Dean's Advisory Council (a group of our students).

Assessment Results
How are assessment results evaluated?
After assessing artifacts of student work using rubrics of the learning outcomes, the percentages of students exceeding, meeting, and not meeting each sub-goal of each learning objective are calculated. These results are then shared with faculty in meetings to discuss the results. Action plans to address any deficiencies are then discussed and, if appropriate, implemented.

How are faculty and students involved in interpreting and evaluating results, and developing strategies to improve the curriculum?
Once faculty have seen the overall results of the assessment process and the percentage of students meeting each sub-goal, a "sensemaking" process begins. Faculty discuss the results and provide examples that relate to what the overall numbers indicate. Once faculty have considered and discussed the assessment results, meetings are held to talk about root causes of sub-par performance on any outcomes and possible actions to address the shortcomings. We plan to involve students to help us interpret results and develop strategies to improve the curriculum.

Are the results used to help the department achieve its program outcomes?
We know that assessment results are more or less useless unless something is done with them. We ask faculty to use the results to help address shortcomings in student performance regarding learning outcomes. We also develop group-level close-the-loop interventions that all faculty are asked to implement. The degree to which we use results in a conscientious manner is independently evaluated by our accrediting agency, the AACSB.

How are assessment results used to improve the curriculum and program?
The results of our assessment activities are discussed and used to guide our efforts to improve our admissions processes, our teaching, and our curriculum. What is learned from artifact review strongly complements what faculty learn about student performance in their individual courses. Shortcomings in student abilities are often clearly revealed through that process, prompting us to make improvements in how we develop students' skills related our learning outcomes.

Are the results being used for budgeting and strategic planning?
No. So far none of our assessment results have been significant enough to require shifts in our budgeting or changes to our strategic plan.

How are results disseminated to faculty, students, advisory boards, and administrators?
As discussed earlier, faculty learn of assessment results in faculty meetings as well as through other means (e-mail, memos, etc.). We can improve the degree to which we provide feedback on

assessment results to our boards and to our students. The university also can improve, which is why the following strategy (i.e., 1.3.6.B) is in the 2015–2020 strategic plan: Investigate additional ways to measure, document, and publicize the University's effectiveness in preparing students for academic and professional success.

Are students informed about their progress toward the learning outcomes?
Students are not informed about their progress toward learning outcomes. We see this as a positive transition we can make within the HSB. Currently, students think about their degree attainment from a "check off the boxes" mentality, meaning they concentrate on completing courses required in the curriculum of their particular degrees. What we aspire to achieve is for students to have two goals: (a) to complete the courses required for the degree they are seeking, and (b) to master the learning outcomes that must be achieved to graduate with a degree from the HSB. In other words, we want students to be at least as concerned with mastering important skills as they are about completing course work and attaining a certain GPA. We are aware that a few universities (e.g., Alverno College) have shifted to this approach, and we believe we can benefit from their "lessons learned."

Continuous Processes
What processes are in place to ensure that the academic program assessment plan is periodically reviewed, evaluated, and updated when appropriate?
We have developed a comprehensive set of planning and tracking documents which describe when we will assess each of our learning outcomes, who will be involved, and what artifacts will be used. The yearly assessment plan summary prepared for the Provost's Office serves as a reminder to systematically and critically review our assessment processes.

Who is responsible for initiating and supporting the on-going process of program improvement?
The HSB Dean is the cognizant manager of the HSB's process of program improvement and is ultimately responsible. Because the HSB faculty and staff are involved in and are primary implementers of improvement actions, the HSB assessment process is collaborative.

Who is responsible for ensuring that results from each year are the basis for action plans for the following year?
The HSB's AoL Committee is responsible for overseeing that assessment results are followed up with appropriate actions. In terms of implementing the actions (i.e., closing the loop), the HSB's Curriculum Committee is responsible for helping direct any curriculum changes with appropriate faculty.

What steps are taken to assure that artifact reviews are conducted in a rigorous and efficient manner?
The artifact review procedure mentioned earlier was created to help with that. It specifies activities to do before an artifact review (e.g., meet with the instructor to ensure understanding of the artifacts), during the review (e.g., make notes about observations of student performance), and after (e.g., reach consensus among reviewers about the most accurate score for each artifact).

What steps are taken to prevent faculty "churn" (turnover) and burnout among those leading assessment efforts?
This is a major issue for the HSB. Many faculty avoid serving on the AoL Committee because of the heavy workload. Scheduling and managing assessments, requesting assistance from faculty, ensuring that reviewers perform their tasks correctly, reminding faculty to finish tasks and do them as specified, documenting results, preparing reports, and following up on numerous programmatic and close-the-loop issues is immensely time-consuming if performed at a high level. The AoL Committee, therefore, requires participants who actively engage in the committee's task in a conscientious manner; passive faculty who "sit" on the committee but do little work are of no use and hamper assessment efforts, so we try to keep these people off the committee. That, however, in combination with what was noted earlier about faculty's reluctance to serve on the committee, severely limits the pool of suitable committee members.

How are individual close-the-loop efforts by individual faculty encouraged and documented?
When an unsatisfactory level of performance on a learning outcome is identified, faculty are informed and asked what they can do to address that deficiency. Their planned actions are requested in writing, and, recently, faculty have been asked to describe their close-the-loop actions via an online questionnaire.

What methods are used to ensure that "lessons learned" are captured? What resources can new AoL Committee members use to get "up to speed"?
Successes and mistakes in assessment activities are evaluated and useful tips for the future are included in this assessment plan and in the artifact review procedure. New assessment committee members can ramp up their knowledge for their committee work by reading this assessment plan, reviewing AoL documents on the HSB I-drive, reading the artifact review procedure, reading the most-recent assessment summary, asking for tips from former AoL Committee members, attending an AACSB assurance of learning workshop, and reading this article: Gilbreath, B., Norman, S., Frew, E., Fowler, K., & Billington, P. (2016). Helpful tools for managing the assurance of learning process. *Business Education Innovation Journal, 8*(1), 111–122.

Do you approach assessment from a mastery *or* improvement *standpoint?*
The HSB assesses students' knowledge and skills related to our learning outcomes at "exit," or near graduation whenever possible. While some programs try to track improvement in students' skills, for example, between their sophomore and senior years, we do not follow that approach. Our assessment efforts are involved and intensive, and we believe that trying to measure students' improvement rather than their mastery, near graduation, would siphon off limited time and resources that are needed for close-the-loop activities.

What are some of the HSB's goals for the next few years regarding assessment, student learning, and process improvement?

The HSB's AoL Committee believes that the following goals are worth pursuing:

- formally incorporating assurance of learning contributions as an expected job duty that is specifically addressed as part of the annual performance review (APR) within the category *service*;
- refining our rubrics to do a better job of capturing the essential and most meaningful differences between students who exceed, meet, and do not meet expectations on learning outcomes;
- improving some of our learning outcomes to reflect the skills our graduate need most;
- improving the degree to which we provide feedback on assessment results to our boards and to our students; and
- involving students in analyzing and addressing learning deficiencies and determining possible solutions.
- revising the rubrics to set significantly higher standards for our graduate students as compared to our undergraduate students mainly regarding problem solving, writing skills, and ethics SLOs.

How frequently are all SLOs assessed?

The HSB's AoL committee attempts to assess every SLO on regular basis with them being on a two to three year rotation. If however there are issues or concerns with a specific SLO then we try to assess it more frequently. We plan in advance as to which SLOs will be assessed in the next academic year and contact the faculty offering the courses covering these SLOs for artifact collection and assessment. Here are SLOs that we will be assessing during AY 2019–2020:

Undergraduate SLOs	Planned Semester of Assessment
Describe the role of teams in organizations	Fall 2019
Demonstrate the effective use of team tools	Fall 2019
Demonstrate effective behavior in teams	Fall 2019
Demonstrate proper mechanics in written formats.	Spring 2020
Use vocabulary appropriate for target audience.	Spring 2020
Be effective in oral communication and presentations.	Spring 2020
Appropriately define problem(s).	Spring 2020
Identify known and unknown information.	Spring 2020
Translate problem into mathematical language.	Spring 2020
Solve the problem.	Spring 2020
Check your answer.	Spring 2020