

Assessment Plan for Business Information Systems Goals and Plan

Background

Before developing a mission statement for the BIS degree we consulted a number of university and College of Business documents. These included:

- California State University Cornerstone Report (adopted 1/28/1998)
- California State University Chico Mission
- College of Business Mission Statement (adopted April 2004)
- College of Business Strategic Goals for 2004-05 (updated annually)

The contribution of each of these documents can be found in Appendix A. Based on this review and given a desire by the BIS faculty to be consistent with the missions and goals for the larger organizations to which we belong, the following mission statement for the BIS program was developed by stakeholder input and adopted by the BIS faculty in Spring 2003 in time for the new program launch of Fall 2003.

Business Information System: Mission Statement

We offer an innovative, technologically-focused business program providing students with a foundation for life-long learning that leads to professional success. Our program is built on applied learning aligned with leading industry standards. We affirm the importance of ethical conduct, stakeholder participation, scholarship and public service.

Business Information Systems (BIS) Learning Goals

From the mission statement in Fall 2003, the BIS faculty consulted with program stakeholders including our industry advisory board members to develop the following set of learning goals. These goals were then modified to align with AACSB and the common goals shared with Business Administration (BADM), the other undergraduate program in the College of Business.

General Knowledge Learning Goals

Each student graduating with a BIS degree is able to:

- **G1 (Communication Skills)** – Effectively present information orally and in writing.
- **G2 (Information Technology Skills)** – Demonstrate proficiency in the use of information technology.
- **G3 (Critical Thinking Skills)** – Critically evaluate, analyze and interpret information to solve problems.
- **G4 (Diversity Skills)** – Demonstrate an understanding of a diverse world.
- **G5 (Ethical Skills)** – Understand and evaluate ethical issues and situations.

BIS -Specific Learning Goals

All students graduating with a degree in BIS:

- **BIS1 (Business Communication Skills)** - Can demonstrate effective oral and written business communication.
- **BIS2 (Business Information Technology Skills)** – Can demonstrate proficiency in using current IT technology.
- **BIS3 (Business Critical Thinking Skills)** – Can analyze business problems and construct IT solutions when appropriate.
- **BIS4 (Business Diversity Skills)** – Can work effectively in multi-cultural teams.
- **BIS5 (Business Ethical Skills)** – Are aware of their ethical responsibilities to society and their profession.
- **BIS6 (Business Decision Making Skills)** – Can make effective business decisions.
- **BIS7 (Business Specialization Skills)** – Have sufficient knowledge and skill in their field of specialization to succeed in business and/or graduate school.

Assessment Plan

After the goals were developed, the BIS faculty defined the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at least for the initial goals that will be assessed within the coming three year period. As we progress through the actual assessment of the learning goals these SLO statements will be refined and redefined to fit the actual measurement opportunities within the curriculum. The goal course alignment matrix (viewed as a separate excel spreadsheet) contains the courses in the core (courses taken by all BIS majors regardless of option) and the SLOs as they are currently envisioned. For each intersection of course and SLO the level of measurement is indicated by the appropriate symbol for introducing the SLO (I), practicing the SLO (P), or mastering the SLO (M). It is important to note that Mastery is defined as the highest level of skill, knowledge or value that can be expected of students **given the context of the BIS degree**. In other words, we expect graduates to get better at each goal as they progress through life, so the level of mastery is where we expect to see the highest level of performance within the program for each SLO. For example, one expects professionals to improve their oral presentation skills after they work in a job that requires a lot of professional presentations. Mastery of oral presentation skills for graduates can be demonstrated in BIS 496 where we expect to see the highest level of professionalism for our graduating seniors.

Since program level assessment of learning goals is a complex and daunting task, the faculty approached and defined this process with the following guiding principles:

- Sustainable over time,
- Focused on evidence of student learning,
- Course embedded – non-intrusive to faculty and students,
- Easy to use,

- Reflective of external as well as internal stakeholders, and
- Actionable.

In other words we want to use course embedded assignments, exams, etc. as the evidence of learning that can be easily assessed by faculty, other students, recruiters, and people interested in the skill/knowledge set of BIS graduates.

The BIS program is working with the BADM program within the College of Business to execute a consistent program of assessment across programs, at least for the five common goals shared by both programs. In other words, we have agreed to assess the first 5 goals together and then do the remaining goals separately. The course alignment matrix contains the timing for assessment of each goal. Since rubrics are being developed for each SLO by a group of faculty we have identified a pilot semester where we develop the assessment method and test it followed by the actual assessment. Planned due dates for the final reports related to each goal are also indicated in the matrix..

The timing expressed as semesters indicates the initial data collection point for each SLO. After the first data collection point follow-up assessment will occur for each SLO on a two year cycle. For example, the writing SLO was pilot tested in Fall 2004 and the actual assessment occurred in Spring 2005. We will assess writing again the Spring of 2007. This gives us time to implement interventions to improve the learning environment and test results. (More can be viewed on this in the assessment report related to the Communication Goal which is due February 1, 2006.)

Overview of the Assessment Process

While there will be some deviations as we progress through the assessment of each goal, the plan is that the following general process will be used to do the actual assessment. The process also calls for the use of STEPS (Student Tracking and Evaluation Performance System) which was developed by the College of Business and used by other programs within the university and at least 2 other universities. A brief history of the development of this system appears as Appendix B.

By using STEPS we have learned that one work sample from a course can be used to measure progress on more than one learning goal. The course alignment matrix identifies the appropriate potential work samples by goal within each required course. We plan to start with the assessment at the mastery level and if needed assess at the practice and finally the introductory levels of measurement.

The basic tasks that are followed to complete the assessment of each goal via the appropriate SLOs are:

1. Identify and appoint faculty to sit on the College committees designed to develop the detailed assessment process for each goal and/or SLO. For example we had a group interested in writing do the SLO related to writing competency.
2. Identify the potential reviewers for the related goal/SLO. Identify these people and find out how many student work samples each is willing to review.

3. Determine (Faculty Committee) initial rubric by reviewing existing rubrics and then fine tuning it to the SLO in question.
4. Configure the STEPS system to accept student work:
 - Enter in the goal and related SLO
 - Identify the course(s) to be used
 - Obtain appropriate student data from CMS for the courses
 - Define and link the rubric to the SLO
 - Identify the student work sample and link this to the rubric
 - Define the reviewers and enter their contact information
5. Students upload work,
6. Assign reviewers to appropriate work samples,
7. Reviews are conducted via STEPS interface,
8. Data are summarized and downloaded for use by the faculty,
9. Committee reviews the results and recommends appropriate interventions
10. Recommendations reviewed and approved by Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and appropriate department faculty,
11. Follow-up to implementation of recommendations done by Department Chair(s),
12. Final report of process, results, and planned interventions due to Dean.

Appendix A: Summary of Documents used to Develop Goals

California State University Cornerstone Report (adopted 1/28/1998)

Goals:

- We must continue to provide educational excellence in a teaching-centered, collegiate institution.
- We must provide access for the growing and ever more diverse population of Californians seeking higher education in the face of limited public resources.
- We must demonstrate our effectiveness to the people of California and to their elected leadership in crafting a new compact with the public we serve.
- We must design a more responsive post-baccalaureate system to meet the demand in California for liberally educated professionals.

California State University Chico Mission

California State University, Chico is a comprehensive university serving Northern California and other regions of the state, as well as the nation and the world, through instruction, research and public service.

Our first priority is the education of our students by creating and maintaining selected quality undergraduate and graduate programs. We will be known for the purposeful integration of liberal and applied learning that provides our students with the knowledge, skills, and moral and intellectual virtues that form the basis for life-long learning and contribution.

We affirm the importance of scholarship and public service. We support the exploration of the frontiers of knowledge, the integration of ideas, the connecting of thought to action, and the inspiring of students. We make the results of these academic efforts available for public scrutiny by all our constituents. We will maintain extensive continuing education and public service programs that serve the needs of our varied constituencies.

CSU Chico Strategic Priorities:

- To create and enhance innovative, high quality, and student-centered learning environments.
- To invest in faculty and staff development and renewal.
- To enhance academic programs by building a state-of-the-art technological learning environment.
- To reaffirm the role of CSU, Chico as the anchor institution of the region and develop positive links to our community and region.
- To diversify our sources of revenue and strategically manage the resources entrusted to us by the State and the people of California.

College of Business Mission Statement (source: COB website)

We serve California as a student-centered, residential learning community that fosters innovative, high quality business education emphasizing applied learning, integration of technology, and understanding of diversity. We continuously improve our learning community through research and stakeholder participation.

COB Strategic Goals (developed Fall 2004)

- Graduate students who meet or exceed the stated learning goals.
- Improve the educational opportunities of our students to gain experience in small business while supporting small business development in our immediate geographic area.
- Support international educational opportunities for our students.
- Become the Business program of choice for Northern California.
- Significantly expand programs for recruitment and retention of diverse students.
- Improve level of student participation in our-of-class professional activities.
- Provide a consistent, quality experience for all first time students.
- Improve quality of work life for COB faculty, administration, and staff.
- Replace retiring faculty with faculty who fit the teacher-scholar model.
- Achieve or maintain academically-qualified (AQ) or professionally-qualified (PQ) status of all tenure/tenure-track, full time, and part-time faculty.
- Develop a staff sufficient to meet the COB mission
- Obtain minimum state funding for faculty, staff, and administrators to meet accreditation.
- Obtain financial support for key areas including computer infrastructure replacement and operation, advising, assessment, international opportunities for students, and diversity recruitment and retention programs.
- Diversify funding for the COB.
- Create an environment that supports ethical values by faculty, students, and staff.
- Encourage faculty, staff, and students to engage in community service.

Appendix B: Overview of STEPS

The BIS program is committed to using the STEPS (Student Tracking, Evaluation and Performance System) to do assessment of the learning goals as part of the overall assessment program. In addition, each option intends to find an external comprehensive instrument that can benchmark graduates from each option against similar graduates from other programs. However, the cornerstone of the BIS assessment plan is to internally validate the learning objectives by tying the assessment to course embedded work samples that are externally reviewed for quality and relevance.

The advantages of using STEPS include:

- Double blind assessment by external reviewers who have a stake in the BIS program, including industry partners, recruiters and/or former students,
- Cost efficient use of COB resources
- Using work already being done in the courses making assessment part of a continuous improvement effort as opposed to something external to the programs,
- Immediate feedback to the students so they can see how industry partners view their work, and
- Repeated measures on a learning goal through different work samples in different courses taken by students over time.

In short, the use of STEPS for assessment allows us to focus on what we already do to measure results in terms of student learning and still uses external stakeholders to help us assess our program goals. Finally, instead of measuring our students only against an external benchmark and then being tempted to “teach to the test”, embedded assessment maintains the unique integrity of the programs developed at CSU Chico.