

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements Report
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies - Undergraduate Programs
AY 2014-2015**

Certificate Programs

Undergraduate Business Management Certificate Program

Key Assessment Findings

The Metropolitan School of Professional Studies (MSPS) assesses learning outcomes for the Business Management Certificate Program via a rubric for the Strategic Audit/Applications Project as prepared for synthesis course MBU 324 *Strategic Management Practices*. Because MBU 324 is the synthesis course for both the Business Management Certificate Program and the Human Resource Management Certificate Program (see below) and because MBU 324 is a required course for the Bachelor of Arts in Management Degree Program, the data below is reflective of students who were part of the Business Management Certificate Program as well as students who were not. Nevertheless, the data is significant for understanding where curricular improvements need to be made for the Business Management Certificate Program.

In the fall 2014 semester, 15 students completed MBU 324 *Strategic Management Practices* and the embedded Strategic Audit/Applications Project in two sections. As indicated in Table 1, the only trait in which all students exceeding expectations was synthesis & integration of knowledge. As a result, there is room for improvement in all other areas, especially Presentation of Implications & Strategic Recommendations for Practice (mean 1.87), Assessment/Analysis of Organizational Effectiveness (mean 2.20), Support & Use of Evidence (2.40).

Table 1: MBU 324 Strategic Audit/Applications Project Rubric Data (AY 2014-2015)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Development/Presentation of Organizational Profile/Overview	9	60%	5	33%	1	7%	2.53	0.64	15
2) Assessment/Analysis of Organizational Effectiveness	7	47%	4	27%	4	27%	2.20	0.86	15
3) Presentation of Implications & Strategic Recommendations for Practice	2	13%	9	60%	4	27%	1.87	0.64	15

4) Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00	15
5) Structure & Organization	10	67%	3	20%	2	13%	2.53	0.74	15
6) Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	11	73%	4	27%	0	0%	2.73	0.46	15
7) Written Presentation	11	73%	3	20%	1	7%	2.67	0.62	15
8) Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	11	73%	4	27%	0	0%	2.73	0.46	15
9) Support & Use of Evidence	7	47%	7	47%	1	7%	2.40	0.63	15
10) Project Oral Presentation Reasoned Analysis	12	92%	0	0%	1	8%	2.85	0.55	13

Curricular Improvements

The assessment findings that emerged from an analysis of the MBU 324 *Strategic Management Practices* rubric are promising in that most students met or exceeded expectations. However, because there were students who fell below the expectations for many of the traits, there is room for overall improvement in the Business Management Certificate cohort. In particular, the rubric suggests that students need more assistance in the areas of critical thinking and strategic application of knowledge. To these ends, MSPS administration will initiate conversations and planning with the instructors for the MBU 324 courses to create and implement workshops and assignments to aid students in their critical thinking skills. In addition, MSPS continue to employ an in-house writing tutor and offer student support programming through the MSPS Student Development Series that focuses specifically on academic and professional development in conjunction with other University support services (e.g., the Center for Academic Success, the Writing Center, and Career Services). These programs can be tailored to meet the specific student needs as identified by the faculty.

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### **Undergraduate Human Resource Management Certificate Program**

#### **Key Assessment Findings**

MSPS assesses learning outcomes for the Human Resource Management Certificate program via a rubric for the Strategic Audit/Applications Project as prepared for synthesis course MBU 324 *Strategic Management Practices*. Given that MBU 324 is the synthesis course for both the Human Resource Management Certificate program and the Business Management Certificate program, please see Table 1 (above) for a summary of key assessment findings.

## Curricular Improvements

Given that the assessment findings discussed with regard to the Business Management Certificate program are applicable to the Human Resources Certificate program, the curricular improvements are also transferrable. Please refer to the “Curricular Improvements” section developed for the Business Management Certificate program (p. 5) for proposed enhancements.

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Undergraduate Human Services Administration Certificate Program

MSPS assesses learning outcomes for the undergraduate Human Services Administration Certificate program through a rubric for the Scenario/Applications Project as prepared for synthesis course MSO 340 *Human Services Administration*.

In the fall 2014 semester, 9 students completed MSO 340 *Human Services Administration* and the embedded Scenario/Applications Project. As indicated in Table 2, most of the students enrolled in MSO 340 met or exceeded expectations for all traits, and students only fell below expectations in the area of Grammar, Mechanics, and Documentation. The highest mean score (2.44) was for Presentation of Implications & Strategic Recommendations for Practice. The lowest mean score (2.11) was for Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation, Support & Use of Evidence, and Synthesis and Integration of Knowledge.

Key Assessment Findings

Table 2: MSO 340 Scenario/Applications Project Rubric Data (AY 2014-2015)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Development/Presentation of Organizational Profile/Overview	3	33%	6	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.50	9
2) Assessment/Analysis of Organizational Effectiveness	3	33%	6	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.50	9

3) Presentation of Implications & Strategic Recommendations for Practice	4	44%	5	56%	0	0%	2.44	0.53	9
4) Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	1	11%	8	89%	0	0%	2.11	0.33	9
5) Structure & Organization	2	22%	7	78%	0	0%	2.22	0.44	9
6) Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	3	33%	4	44%	2	22%	2.11	0.78	9
7) Written Presentation	3	33%	6	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.50	9
8) Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	2	22%	7	78%	0	0%	2.22	0.44	9
9) Support & Use of Evidence	1	38%	8	89%	0	0%	2.11	0.33	9
10) Project Oral Presentation Reasoned Analysis	3	33%	6	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.50	9

Curricular Improvements

Given that the fall 2014 cohort of students performed significantly better than their fall 2013 counterparts, MSPS has reason to be encouraged. Nevertheless, the rubric for MSO 340 *Human Services Administration* indicates that students are struggling in the areas of critical thinking and general writing skills. MSPS will continue to partner with other University offices to provide workshops and presentations to help in both areas, as well as continue to offer a faculty writing tutor who will be available to all students. Additionally, the MSPS Assistant/Associate deans will continue discussing academic concerns with the faculty to ensure proper resources are being utilized for students in their courses (e.g., CUA Center for Academic Success, CUA Writing Center, etc.).

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### **Undergraduate Information Technology Certificate Program**

#### **Key Assessment Findings**

MSPS assesses learning outcomes for the undergraduate Information Technology Certificate program by means of a rubric for the Personal Technology Assessments as prepared for synthesis course MIS 457 *Design and Implementation: Emerging Environments*.

In the fall 2014 semester, 5 students completed MIS 457 *Design and Implementation: Emerging Environments* and the embedded Personal Technology Assessments. Unfortunately, rubric data was not submitted by the instructor for the fall 2014 semester, but the pass rates are shown below. The lowest overall grade of any student in the course was an A-. Such indicates that students performed very well in the course.

**Table 3: MIS 457 Emerging Environments Pass Rate (AY 2014-2015)**

|                                                                                         | Fail |       | Pass |         | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|------|---------|-------|
|                                                                                         | N    | %     | N    | %       |       |
| Undergraduate Program<br>MIS 457 Design and<br>Implementation: Emerging<br>Environments | 0    | 0.00% | 5    | 100.00% | 5     |

### Curricular Improvements

Because we have no rubric data for this course, we cannot draw firm conclusions on how best to assist students in this program. However, based on last years' data and comparison to other programs, improvements in areas related to writing are critical thinking are likely to be necessary. Therefore, the curricular improvements recommended for the students in the Information Technology Certificate program parallel those proposed for the students in the other certificate programs (Business Management, Human Resource Management, and Human Services Administration). MSPS will continue to offer a faculty writing tutor who will be available to all students. Additionally, the MSPS Assistant/Associate deans will continue discussing academic concerns with the faculty to ensure proper resources are being utilized for students in their courses (e.g., CUA Center for Academic Success and CUA Writing Center). Finally, MSPS will continue to offer student support programming through the Student Development Series that is tailored specifically to students' academic needs as identified by the faculty.

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Bachelor's Degree Programs

Key Assessment Findings

MID 499 Senior Seminar Pass Rates

MSPS students pursuing any of the three¹ undergraduate degree programs — Bachelor of Arts in Information Technology, Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (majors in Social Work², Social Science, and Interdisciplinary Studies), and Bachelor of Arts in Business Management — must complete the required, one-semester capstone course, MID 499 *Senior Seminar*.

² The Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a major in Social Work is offered in conjunction with CUA's National Catholic School of Social Service (NCSSS); please see the assessment statement submitted by NCSSS.

Satisfactory performance (i.e., a grade of “C-” or better) in this course serves in place of a comprehensive examination in satisfying the university graduation requirement. In AY 2014-2015, 91.49% of students passed the capstone requirement (see Table 4).

Table 4: MID 499 Senior Seminar Pass Rates (AY 2014-2015)

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Undergraduate Program MID 499 Senior Seminar	3	4.69%	61	95.31%	64

Bachelor’s Program Rubrics

The primary method through which MSPS assesses learning outcomes for the three bachelor’s programs is through a rubric for the Capstone Research and Application Project as prepared in MID 499 *Senior Seminar*.³ However, MSPS also assesses learning in the bachelor’s programs through individual rubrics for three courses — MBU 324 *Strategic Management Practices*, MIS 457 *Design and Implementation: Emerging Environments*, and MSO 340 *Human Services Administration* — that best capture the essence of each major.⁴ Findings associated with rubric analyses for these three courses were reported on pages 1, 3, and 4 of this report. Findings associated with the Capstone Research and Application Project are reported below. Unfortunately, instructor data was only submitted for the summer 2013 term.

MID 499 Capstone Research and Application Project

In AY 2014-2015, 47 students completed MID 499 *Senior Seminar* and the required Capstone Research and Application Project. As indicated in Table 5 below, students showed the greatest proficiency in a) synthesis and integration of knowledge, b) thesis/focus, c) critical thinking and reasoned analysis, and d) oral presentation (means of 2.69, 2.31, 2.31, and 2.31, respectively). Conversely, the traits that warrant the greatest improvement are a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation, b) written presentation, and c) support and use of evidence (means of 1.62, 1.69, and 1.92, respectively). These results indicate that although a good number of students either met or exceeded expectations, between 38 and 62 percent fell below expectations in the three trouble areas mentioned.

Table 5: Capstone Research and Application Project Rubric Data (AY 2014-2015)

Trait	Level	Mean	SD	Total
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³ Course number changed from 495 to for 499 in 2013.

⁴ No individual course is identified for the Social Work major given NCSS’s comprehensive assessments. No individual course is identified for the Interdisciplinary Studies major.

	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				N
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Thesis/Focus	27	64%	13	31%	2	5%	2.60	0.59	42
2) Support & Use of Evidence	18	43%	21	50%	3	7%	2.36	0.62	42
3) Structure & Organization	26	62%	13	31%	3	7%	2.55	0.63	42
4) Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	24	57%	15	36%	3	7%	2.50	0.63	42
5) Written Presentation	19	45%	20	48%	3	7%	2.38	0.62	42
6) Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	18	43%	24	57%	0	0%	2.43	0.50	42
7) Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	21	50%	21	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.51	42
8) Oral Presentation	26	62%	16	38%	0	0%	2.62	0.49	42

Unfortunately, data for the summer 2014 term was not submitted by the instructor who has since left the University.

Curricular Improvements

A review of the mean scores for the Capstone Research and Application Project points to a need to increase students' aptitude with regard to a) Support and Use of Evidence, b) Written Presentation, c) Critical Thinking and Reasoned Analysis, and d) Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge. Each of these areas points to a need to increase students' writing abilities, which is supported further by the evidence found in the data for the learning assessments of major courses. As such, MSPS will provide support to students via curricular improvements in the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, continue and improve offerings of academic support programming, and improve the protocol for encouraging students to take a writing skills course.

The low mean score of writing categories does not match the assessment data for MBU 324, MIS 457, and MSO 340 previously discussed. Each of those courses reflected an improvement in writing related coursework. MID 499, a course built around writing a large research paper does not show the same improvement. It would seem the student development (described below) focusing on writing has improved writing across the curriculum, but progress needs to be monitored further in writing intensive courses.

Writing across the Curriculum

One substantial curricular improvement aimed at enhancing students' writing and research skills involves the MSPS Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program. Beginning in spring 2009, MSPS launched the WAC program for core and major undergraduate courses. As part of the WAC initiative, the faculty has been asked to identify the assignments that would promote and foster excellent writing and research practice. Doing so enabled the MSPS Assistant/Associate deans to ensure that writing maintained a central focus in the curriculum. Moving forward, efforts to improve the WAC initiative will include a) an increased emphasis on faculty grading not solely for content, but also for form, b) a list of top writing issues identified by these assessments provided to faculty in order to promote more targeted writing intervention and assistance.

Academic Support Programming

MSPS will continue to offer special customized workshops that have long been part of MSPS's student development programming model. A central part of this workshop series involves working with campus partners who are the content experts in academic support – including the CUA libraries, Writing Center, and Center for Academic Success. Such partnerships allow MSPS to connect undergraduate students with the campus resources that can be crucial in promoting individual student success.

The assessments of the MSPS undergraduate programs point to a strong curriculum that is addressing students' learning needs and helping them to meet course learning objectives. In many of the assessments, students met or exceeded expectations for most traits. However, students consistently showed room for improvement related to their writing skills. The curricular enhancements described above – developments in the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, academic support programming, and improving the protocol for encouraging students to take MHU 140 – will address the needs identified in the assessments of the MSPS undergraduate programs.

Integration of Writing Assistance into Capstone Courses

Following a trend developed by other schools at CUA, MSPS will work with instructors teaching the capstone courses discussed above to ensure that the writing resources available on campus are better integrated into the curriculum. In particular, all students, regardless of initial ability, should be required to receive help from either the University's Writing Center or MSPS's writing tutor regularly throughout the semester. Doing so should ensure that students are given sufficient help outside the classroom to improve their writing and critical thinking skills.