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Effective design and assessment of an MBA degree program through benchmarking

Abstract

This study describes how Mount Olive College, a four-year liberal arts college in Eastern North Carolina, designed and successfully implemented an MBA degree program. This led to the establishment of a graduate school, change of status from college to university, and development and offering of additional graduate degree programs. The University of Mount Olive (UMO) started offering this MBA degree program in spring 2014. This online degree program has been offered in an accelerated one-year format and in a traditional two-year format. This program has been very successful and enrollment has continued to grow. As of fall 2017, the UMO MBA program was the 9th largest MBA degree program in North Carolina.

A two-year assurance of learning and outcomes assessment was recently completed and the results showed that the UMO MBA faculty has successfully aligned the course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) with the MBA program goals and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). This assessment provided valuable insights that are presented in this study. The UMO has planned to soon offer a hybrid (face-to-face seated plus online) MBA degree program and a healthcare MBA degree program.

Keywords: MBA degree design, assessment of learning, benchmarking.

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Introduction

Educational institutions often seek opportunities for growth in enrollment and also by program development and one way to accomplish this goal is by developing undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Successful degree programs would be benchmarked against national standards and designed to meet stakeholder needs. Such programs would be regularly assessed for their quality and for their alignment with program goals and program learning outcomes.

1. Purpose and scope

This study presents the steps that Mount Olive College (MOC) in Eastern North Carolina took in order to introduce an MBA degree program in spring 2014. Three main topics are presented here:

- ◆ The process of evaluation of stakeholder needs for designing and implementing a graduate degree program.
- ◆ Characteristics of an MBA degree program that was developed and implemented at the University of Mount Olive.
- ◆ Assessment of the MBA degree program to ensure alignment of the course Student Learning Outcomes with program goals and Program Learning Outcomes.

2. Pursuing responsible growth

This section presents the main reasons for developing and introducing an MBA degree program at the University of Mount Olive. The rationale for pursuing a feasibility study for a graduate degree program lies in the Mount Olive College's strategic plan that includes the following:

- ◆ *We will connect to our future with responsible growth and stewardship.*
- ◆ *We will analyze our readiness for providing graduate programs.*

The President of MOC formed a MOC Graduate Committee in spring 2011 to address these strategic objectives. There were seven team members including the college president and vice president of academic affairs. Three faculty members were from the School of Business, while the rest were from the School of Arts and Sciences.

3. A feasibility study for a graduate degree program

The strategic plan for Mount Olive College (MOC) called for evaluating the college's readiness for graduate programs. The newly formed MOC Graduate Committee held its first meeting on Monday April 4, 2011.

This committee evaluated the feasibility and nature of introducing a graduate degree program. This committee designed four survey instruments that were administered and data were collected and analyzed. These surveys interviewed the employers,

alumni, faculty, and students regarding offering a graduate degree program starting in fall 2013.

Some of the main points of the meetings and work accomplished by this team and presented to the Strategic Planning Committee are listed below:

- ◆ The MOC Graduate Committee presented its findings to the Strategic Planning Committee on October 10, 2011.
- ◆ The MOC Graduate Committee, recommended that the College should explore graduate programming.
- ◆ The surveys showed strong support for creating a graduate level degree program in Business Administration.
- ◆ Students, alumni, and faculty preferred courses offered in the evenings and online formats.
- ◆ Students and alumni would seriously consider MOC for their graduate education, if available.
- ◆ Faculty had concerns regarding the institution's ability to provide financial resources to offer graduate degree programs; to recruit and retain qualified graduate faculty; and accreditation with a graduate degree program.
- ◆ Faculty, student, and alumni chose business administration as their first choice for a graduate degree at MOC.
- ◆ Students and alumni identified financial, time, and work commitments as barriers to pursuing a graduate degree.
- ◆ Employers preferred that the personnel take courses at hours that did not clash with normal working hours.
- ◆ Conduct a competitor analysis of ACBSP graduate programs in business in North Carolina.
- ◆ Select an existing campus location to introduce a graduate business program.

4. The timeline for seeking substantive change

The MOC Graduate Committee expressed a desire to submit an application to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to seek a substantive change to a level III institution (graduate degree granting) and also to submit a graduate degree program for their consideration by end of March 2012.

5. Informing COCSACS for intent to seek status change

The President sent a letter of notification to COCSACS for seeking substantive change in his forthcoming application in April 2013.

6. Competitive market analysis for benchmarking

The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) provides accreditation to business schools and programs all over the world.

A faculty subcommittee (Dubas & Ardley, November 5, 2011) examined the potential market opportunities for a graduate program in business, as well as the various curricula of SACS/ACBSP accredited business programs in North Carolina. The ACBSP website identified seventeen educational institutions in North Carolina as its members in 2011. Table 1 describes these institutions. Of these, nine universities offered graduate programs in business; eight of them were accredited, while Campbell University's programs were in candidacy stage. The graduate business programs at these nine universities were evaluated to identify their strengths and weaknesses to define the characteristics of an excellent graduate program in Business Administration. The specific findings of this subcommittee were shared with Graduate Committee members for their review on November 6, 2011.

Their findings also suggested that the logical MOC location to rollout such an MBA program would be at the main campus with online options, since there were a sufficient number of terminally degreed business faculty, facilities, and student support services to facilitate a successful launching.

7. MBA or MS in Business Administration

There was a discussion on selecting between Master of Business Administration degree with a general appeal to a large audience and a more focused Master of Science in Business Administration degree. After discussion and evaluation of various aspects, it was decided that an MBA degree should be offered that would have a larger appeal internationally than a MS degree.

8. The Tillman School of Business graduate program curriculum committee

Here are the main points that show how the Tillman School of Business (TSB) went about designing and implementing an MBA degree program and its assessment of learning program to meet accreditation requirements.

- ◆ The University of Mount Olive first began exploring the possibility of providing an online MBA program in 2011.
- ◆ The Dean of the Tillman School of Business formed a TSB Graduate Committee to develop a proposed business curriculum, based on a competitor analysis, literature review, and the existing capabilities and resources of the college.
- ◆ The TSB Graduate Committee presented the MOC Graduate Committee with "A Draft of

the Proposed MBA Degree Program & Assessment of Learning Plan” final report (Dubas, December 1, 2011). This report contained various aspects of the MBA program, including: administrative matters, program course requirements, program-level learning goals, and a curriculum map.

- ◆ The TSB Graduate Committee had developed a proposed MBA curriculum to meet the needs of our students and other stakeholders. In addition, the curriculum was modeled after other SACS/ACBSP accredited MBA programs.
- ◆ At that time, the Tillman School of Business (TSB) had 30 full time faculty members, all with terminal degrees, and it was accredited by SACS and the Accreditation Council for Business Schools & Programs (ACBSP).
- ◆ The undergraduate degree programs at Tillman School of Business had been accredited by SACS and ACBSP. External program assessment was conducted when students took inbound/outbound exams at Peregrine Academic Services. This external assessment of academic programs measured student knowledge associated with the degree program’s learning outcomes and was used for quality assurance, and external academic benchmarking and all exams were provided online.
- ◆ The proposed MBA degree program included a plan for assessment of learning. Following an assessment framework suggested by AACSB and approved by ACBSP, this document described program-level learning goals and learning outcomes that were linked with various required courses in the degree program. In addition, an assessment plan of these program-level learning outcomes was described in terms of internal assessment through course-embedded rubrics and external assessment.
- ◆ The various aspects and requirements for the proposed MBA degree program were adapted from the MBA degree program requirements at peer universities to fit the needs of our stakeholders. The proposed MBA degree program offered a practical and professional graduate business education that emphasized decision-making, communication, and leadership skills with a consideration for ethical and legal aspects of business. Relevant current business knowledge would be delivered through the use of case studies, simulations, and course projects.
- ◆ The courses for the MBA program (Table 3) were brought before the Tillman School of Business faculty on January 12, 2012 and recommended to move on to the Curriculum Council. The courses were approved by the

Curriculum Council on April 26, 2012. The courses were presented to the university faculty at the May 3, 2012 meeting. The courses were approved by the administration on May 5, 2012.

- ◆ ACC 610 and BUS 670 were 14-week courses, while all others were 7-week courses. While enrollment in the accelerated one-year program of study involved three consecutive academic semesters, enrollment in the standard two-year program of study necessitated six consecutive academic semesters.
- ◆ A course rotation program was developed for a full-time one-year (fall, spring, and summer semesters) program and for a part-time two-year program. A course rotation program for cohorts was also developed.
- ◆ As a result of the work of the TSB Graduate Business Curriculum Committee that Dr. Dubas chaired, the University’s online MBA program began its first course offering in January 2014.

9. Application to SACS for permission to offer an online MBA degree program

In April 2013, the MOC President sent an application to SACSCOC. Here are some topics of this application:

- ◆ Mount Olive College was accredited by the SACSCOC to award Associate and Bachelor degrees (level II).
- ◆ Mount Olive College was seeking accreditation at level III. This application consisted of two parts that together constituted a primary source of information used by SACSCOC to award membership at the new degree level.
 1. Part A – Description of the proposed program (Master of Business Administration (MBA)) to be offered at a more advanced degree level.
 2. Part B – Description of ongoing compliance with the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.
- ◆ The mission of Mount Olive College is as follows: Mount Olive College is a Christian faith-based, values-centered private institution rooted in the liberal arts tradition. We serve our students, our founding church, and our communities. (Revised and approved by Mount Olive College Board of Trustees on February 22, 2011 for use effective July 1, 2011).
- ◆ Name of institution: Mount Olive College.
- ◆ Locations in Mount Olive, Goldsboro, Jacksonville, New Bern, Durham, Washington, and Wilmington, NC.
- ◆ New program: Master of Business Administration (MBA).

- ◆ Date of first enrollment.
- ◆ Projected date of first graduates.
- ◆ Enrollment data: total full-time and part-time undergraduate enrollment.
- ◆ Projected total full-time and part-time enrollment in the new program.
- ◆ Current educational programs:
 1. Associate degree-granting program of at least two years.
 2. Four-or five-year Bachelor degree-granting program.
- ◆ While Mount Olive College offers programs at multiple, leased off-campus instructional sites, it offers a single set of degree programs.

10. SACS's approval to offer MBA degree program

In June 2013, the Board of SACSCOC accredited MOC as a level III institution to offer graduate degrees. They also approved MOC to deliver full degree programs on-line. They also approved MOC's application to offer an online MBA degree program.

11. Becoming a university and offering an MBA degree program

On January 1, 2014, Mount Olive College changed its name to the University of Mount Olive. The University of Mount Olive started to offer an online MBA degree program in spring 2014. To provide its students maximum convenience of time and place, it was decided to offer an online MBA degree program.

12. Assessment of learning for institutional effectiveness

The University of Mount Olive uses the software Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) for institutional effectiveness reports. These reports link to the strategic plan, objectives, and assessments. A gap analysis is used to improve programs and services offered by the institution.

- ◆ The University of Mount Olive uses the SPOL software to house budgets, assessments and annual reviews.
- ◆ An interim assessment of learning for the MBA Program was completed in January 2016 to measure if course level student learning outcomes were meeting program objectives. The findings of this interim assessment of learning were affirmative and the University President shared these findings with SACS.

13. An interim assessment of MBA program learning objectives report to SACS

The MBA program's first artifact assessment was conducted in January 2016. Based on these findings, an interim report was submitted to

SACS. This assessment was required to comply with SACS Standard C.R. 2.5 (Institutional Effectiveness), which reads:

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

Educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.

[As part of the response, the report included a description of how the institution was monitoring the quality of the new program(s). The report summarized current procedures for the assessment of learning outcomes and achievement, and how results would be used to improve the new programs].

14. Assessment of learning and outcomes

This section describes assessment of learning through program assessment. For this purpose, assessment goals and outcomes are described and methods for assessment are indicated below. AACSB (2007) has identified the following five steps of assessment of learning:

1. Definition of student learning goals and objectives.
2. Alignment of curricula with the adopted goals.
3. Identification of instruments and measures to assess learning.
4. Collection, analyzing, and dissemination of assessment information.
5. Using assessment information for continuous improvement of the program curriculum including documentation that the assessment process is being carried out in a systematic, ongoing basis.

TSB followed the above steps for assessing student learning to develop our program goals, program learning outcomes, and course student learning outcomes (Sampson & Betters-Reed, 2008; Zocco, 2011). The principles of good practice for assessing student learning (Astin, et al., 2005) are summarized below:

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment is a goal-oriented process.

4. Assessment requires attention not only to outcomes, but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about. Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change. Assessment alone changes little.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

Table 2 provides the MBA program's present mission, vision, and values. Table 3 lists the courses in the MBA degree program. Table 4 provides the MBA program learning goals, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and their corresponding course-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). A curriculum map, which was produced by the Curriculum Committee, was a vital part of this report due to its establishment of the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which were later translated into more specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in related courses. These outcomes were utilized as the foundation of this assessment. A total of 17 Program Learning Outcomes were established; 6 being assessed by an internal assessment, while the remaining 11 were assessed through an external assessment conducted by Peregrine Academic Services.

15. A two-year assessment of MBA degree program

The main findings of A Final Assessment Report on MBA Program Artifact Assessment (Felts, January 2016) are presented below:

- ◆ **The purpose of the assessment.** The purpose of this assessment was to comply with SACS Standard C.R. 2.5 (Institutional Effectiveness), which requires an institution to identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.
- ◆ **Faculty assessors.** The MBA program assessment involved five faculty members and 150 artifacts from ten MBA courses supplied to each member of the assessment committee prior to beginning their assessments of the artifacts.
- ◆ **Assessment process.** During January 2016, five faculty members at the University's Tillman School of Business conducted an internal assessment of randomly selected artifacts that were taken from each of the ten courses offered in the MBA Program.
- ◆ **Supplying artifacts to MBA program director.** The graduate program administrators selected artifacts at random from course assignments and supplied them to faculty assessors.
- ◆ **Assessment packets and instructions.** The MBA program director provided each faculty assessor with a packet that included the following items: a copy of the artifacts, course syllabus, applicable course assignments and instructions, assignment assessment criteria, and the applicable assessment rubric.
- ◆ **Three program goals.** The first two goals were assessed internally through 150 artifacts in ten courses, while the third goal was assessed through external assessment by Peregrine exams that provide national benchmarks for comparison of performance.
- ◆ **PLOs and SLOs artifacts instructions.** The faculty assessors were provided with instructions for utilizing rubrics to assess artifacts and each PLO & SLO artifact was assessed by two different faculty assessors. After the packets were distributed, each faculty assessor was given instructions concerning how the assessment was to be conducted and their responsibilities related to the assessment and their subsequent individual reporting responsibilities. The findings were reported to the MBA program director within one week.

16. Recommendations from interim assessment

The MBA program assessment involved five faculty members and 150 artifacts from ten MBA courses. The results showed that the MBA program faculty had developed and implemented curriculum that had aligned course SLOs with the program goals and outcomes.

Some comments from faculty assessors are noted below:

1. Some of the assignments did not allow development of alternatives responses.
2. Some rubrics needed minor revisions for better evaluation.
3. Not all documents were consistent in terms of formatting and APA style.

4. Some students tended to put forth minimum effort in their writing.
5. Some teams occasionally lacked cohesiveness and evidence of all team members' participation in team assignments.
6. A central repository of program documents should be created.
7. The MBA faculty should review and update the curriculum map: Student Learning Outcomes.
8. The MBA program could be improved by insights from the core professional competences (external assessment) by Peregrine.
9. The Curriculum Map linking courses with SLOs was very helpful.
10. The assessment leaders provided useful insights into the accreditation criteria, assessment team selection, and the artifacts documents used for the assessment.

Some academic recommendations by assessment leaders are given below:

1. The faculty should be trained in rubric development and assessment of SLOs.
2. Each MBA course should be assessed annually for the appropriateness of its textbook, syllabus, its SLO's and their alignment with PLOs, artifact (assignment) for assessment of SLOs and rubrics.

Some administrative recommendations by assessment leaders are given below:

1. The University should have a model artifact assessment plan and a final report template.
2. Each school/department should have a "champion" who can guide others in assurance of learning and outcomes assessment process.

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17. Submitting interim assessment of learning report to SACS

This interim report included findings, conclusions, and recommendations as a result of the assessment process and was submitted to SACS.

18. Planning to offer a hybrid MBA and a healthcare MBA degree programs

The TSB had planned to offer a hybrid (face-to-face seated plus online) MBA degree program in the near future to supplement its online MBA degree program. A healthcare MBA program was also being developed to serve the community's need for healthcare professionals.

Conclusion

This study has described the process that Mount Olive College, a four-year liberal arts college in Eastern North Carolina, utilized to successfully accomplish its strategic goals for growth and developing graduate degree programs. Its online MBA degree program is the 9th largest MBA program in North Carolina, and the University of Mount Olive has consistently risen in ranks by several publishers who rate academic institutions.

The University of Mount Olive now has a Graduate School with its own Dean, a Graduate Catalog, an online MBA degree program, and graduate degree programs in education and nursing. A healthcare MBA degree program and a hybrid MBA degree programs are being developed. Offering graduate degree programs raises the profile of an academic institution and a focus on continuous curricular improvement serves the needs of all stakeholders.

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Appendix

Table 1. NC colleges and universities listed at the ACBSP website (November 5, 2011)

No.	Name	City	State	Type of programs offered	Accredited
1	Campbell University	Buies Creek	NC	Associate, Bachelor, Graduate	Candidacy
2	Catawba College	Salisbury	NC	Bachelor	Candidacy
3	Gardner-Webb University	Boiling Springs	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	Yes
4	Gaston College	Dallas	NC	Associate Degree	Yes
5	Greensboro College	Greensboro	NC	Bachelor	Yes
6	Guilford College	Greensboro	NC	Bachelor	Candidacy
7	High Point University	High Point	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	Yes
8	Johnson C. Smith University	Charlotte	NC	Bachelor	Yes
9	Lenoir-Rhyne University	Hickory	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	Yes
10	Methodist University	Fayetteville	NC	Associate, Bachelor, Graduate	Yes
11	Mount Olive College	Mount Olive	NC	Bachelor	Yes
12	North Carolina Central University	Durham	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	Yes
13	North Carolina Wesleyan College	Rocky Mount	NC	Bachelor	No
14	Pfeiffer University	Misenheimer	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	No
15	Queens University of Charlotte	Charlotte	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	Yes
16	St. Andrews Presbyterian College	Laurinburg	NC	Bachelor	No
17	Wingate University	Wingate	NC	Bachelor, Graduate	Yes

Source: Accreditation Council for Business Schools & Programs (ACBSP) (Retrieved from http://www.acbsp.org/index.php?mo=st&op=ld&sid=s1_025about&stpg=141#1319675675507)

Table 2. MBA mission statement, vision statement, and values statement, University of Mount Olive (as of November 18, 2015)

<p>MBA mission statement The Master of Business Administration degree at the University of Mount Olive provides program graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in our global economy. This program is unique in its focus on creating synergies in business relationships and emphasizing the importance of ethical business practices.</p>
<p>MBA vision statement We are committed to providing contemporary learning to our graduate scholars by delivering engaged, innovative, and supportive learning experiences through inspiring faculty, supportive technology, various delivery methodologies, and various other contemporary learning exposures.</p>
<p>MBA values statement We value the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christian values and principles; 2. Our scholars' quality of learning experience and success; 3. Our faculty's teaching excellence and inspiration as well as their development and contributions to the program and students' success; 4. Outstanding service quality and well being of all of our scholars, community, faculty, and stakeholders in general; 5. Effective use of innovation and technologies; 6. Successful collaboration both internally and externally; 7. Positive approaches to problem identification and solutions; and 8. Respect and dignity for others.

Table 3. MBA Degree Program Requirements. MBA Program of Study (30 semester hours)

Course Descriptions. University of Mount Olive: Master of Business Administration	
BUS 500 Business Essentials	This requisite orientation course prepares students for their MBA program of study. Students will become familiar with (a) the online learning environment, (b) tools, techniques and tips to succeed as an online learner, and (c) UMO policies and procedures as well as complete an individualized course of study designed to prepare each student for the rigors of MBA coursework. Students take an inbound assessment to appraise their proficiency along core business topic. Based on the results of the student's inbound assessment, each student's customized course of study will entail the completion of required standalone business modules and supplemental exercises. Each self-paced online interactive educational module together with the supplemental material equips the student with the essential business knowledge of one core business topic.
ECO 600 Managerial Economics	Survey of microeconomic concepts applied to managerial decisions. Topics include consumer's decision making and managerial decision making; competition, market power, the firm, production, cost, estimation of demand using regression analysis, price elasticity, pricing practices, economics of information, and innovation.
MGT 640 Leadership and Organizational Behavior	This course explores historical and contemporary leadership and organizational behavior theories for organizational effectiveness and change processes that can be used to improve organizational performance.
ACC 610 Managerial Accounting	This course covers the use of an organization's accounting information for decision-making. Course topics include financial and managerial accounting concepts, data measurement, product costing, interpreting financial statements, cost-volume-profit relationships, budgeting, and accounting for planning and control.
FIN 640 Financial Markets and Corporate Strategies	This course examines how firms evaluate investment opportunities and identify the appropriate means of financing them. Specific topics covered include time value of money, cash management, cost of capital, capital budgeting decisions under certainty and uncertainty, capital structure theory and dividend policy, capital market theory, raising external capital, leasing policy, business valuation, options and managerial implications, derivatives, and risk management. Prerequisites: ECO 600, ACC 610.
MKT 640 Marketing Management	This course introduces the marketing perspective on strategy development, the elements of marketing analysis, and to the functional decision areas of the marketing manager including products and product lines, pricing policies, branding, promotion and advertising, and channels of distribution. Topics include customer behavior evaluation, value assessment, market segmentation, targeting, and positioning; how to gain and sustain competitive advantages, how to monitor marketing performance and customer satisfaction, and how to develop and implement marketing plans.
MIS 640 Technology for Managerial Decision Making	This course examines the roles and application of information technology in managerial decision-making. Topics include but are not limited to data warehousing, data mining, business performance management, text- and web mining, and decision theory, such as decision-making under uncertainty, risk, and data-based inferences.
BUS 640 Logistics & Operations Management	This course takes a strategic view of operations in both a manufacturing and service context and stresses linkages to other functional areas like finance and marketing. Topics include process design and analysis, cost structure, inventory management, supply chain, quality, project planning and control, operations, organizational structures, work design, scheduling, materials management, and advanced operations techniques.
BUS 620 Business Ethics	Analysis of ethical dilemmas and development of appropriate responses; relationship of ethical management and law; individual ethical decision making, implications for corporate social responsibility; managing shareholders vs. managing stakeholders; issues such as protection of the environment, workplace safety, product liability, regulation, and fiduciary obligations.
BUS 630 Business Law	This course explores the organization and theory of the American legal system and its relationship to business, including contracts, agency, tort and criminal law, and employment law. Intellectual property law, including patent, copyright, trade secrets and trademark law. International differences in intellectual property law and moves toward harmonization.
BUS 670 Strategic Management	This capstone course presents basic strategic concepts for application at both the corporate and business unit levels. Students will be able to forecast and evaluate the effects of major business decisions; assess the benefits and problems of integrating corporate and functional strategies; and to formulate approaches for managing strategic change. Students will be able to create and implement a sense of corporate direction; make choices about products and markets involving the integration of different functional areas; able to position a business to increase returns for shareholders and stakeholders; acquire the skills involved in identifying critical issues, evaluating various options, and developing and implementing business plans.

Table 4. The MBA program learning goals, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and their corresponding course-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

<p>Goal 1. Critical / analytical reasoning competencies</p> <p>PLO 1.1. Problem identification and formulation (ACC 610 and FIN 640) ACC 610 SLOs. Students should be able to develop the following budgets at the completion of this assignment: Sales, Purchases, Selling expense, and General and administrative expense. FIN 640 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following upon completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Analyze a firm's financial situation by using financial tools provided during the course. ◆ Evaluate and make investment decisions based on the information of projects. ◆ Evaluate a firm's value. <p>PLO 1.2. Solution development techniques (MIS 640 and BUS 640) MIS 640 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Employ key concepts and terminology applicable to quality management and improvement. ◆ Explain the various dimensions of quality, its measurement and management, and means by which quality - product or service - may be improved. <p>BUS 640 SLOs. After completing Unit 4, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Employ key concepts and terminology applicable to quality management and improvement. ◆ Explain the various dimensions of quality, its measurement and management, and means by which quality - product or service - may be improved. ◆ Discuss the quality management and approaches employed to improve the quality of the business' products and/or services. ◆ Discuss product and/or service quality, quality control, quality improvement, and/or quality management. <p>PLO 1.3. Solution effectiveness evaluation (ACC 610 and MIS 640) ACC 610 SLOs. Students should be able to develop the following budgets at the completion of this assignment: sales, purchases, selling expense, and general and administrative expense. MIS 640 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Employ key concepts and terminology applicable to quality management and improvement. ◆ Explain the various dimensions of quality, its measurement and management, and means by which quality - product or service - may be improved.
<p>Goal 2. Communication competencies</p> <p>PLO 2.1. Clear and effective writing (ECO 600 and BUS 620) ECO 600 SLO. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write clearly and effectively for a business audience. ◆ Present clearly and persuasively to a business audience. <p>BUS 620 SLO. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write clearly and effectively for a business audience. ◆ Present clearly and persuasively to a business audience. <p>PLO 2.2. Clear and persuasive presentation (BUS 630 and MKT 640) BUS 630 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write clearly and effectively for a business audience. ◆ Present clearly and persuasively to a business audience. <p>MKT 640 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Create and implement a marketing plan. ◆ Write an effective marketing plan. <p>PLO 2.3. Team participation and leadership (MGT 640 and BUS 670) MGT 640 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Collaborate with others concerning the concepts of leadership skills and traits, as presented in the course, through team discussions and reporting. ◆ Apply decision-making and understanding of the concepts of leadership traits and skills through the evaluation of a business/leadership situation as presented in a case study. ◆ Identify the elements of leadership traits and skills approaches. ◆ Identify personal strengths and weaknesses relative to their leadership traits and skills. <p>BUS 670 SLOs. Students should be able to do the following after the completion of this assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assess a firm's strategic capabilities. ◆ Construct a comprehensive strategic assessment of an organization. ◆ Predict effects of changes in the environment on a firm's performance. ◆ Describe how the mission statement, vision statement, and objectives relate to the chosen strategy of an organization. ◆ Discover the comprehensiveness of the strategic planning process. ◆ Appraise given strategic analyses and construct alternatives where there are weaknesses. ◆ Construct a comprehensive strategic assessment of an organization. ◆ Express the response with clear and effective writing. ◆ Express the response with clear and persuasive presentation. ◆ Participate in a team setting.
<p>Goal 3. Core professional competencies External assessment by Peregrine.</p>