

Capitalizing on Human Capital: Developing a Faculty Driven Model of Assessment

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Abstract

*In this paper, the process of developing a faculty driven model of assessment is examined for a school of business at a small midwestern urban university. The purpose of developing a model for assessment is two-fold. First, the process is examined from the development of strategic initiatives to the creation of an instrument used to obtain both quantitative and qualitative measures of how **first** faculty perceive they are performing in light of these strategic initiatives. Once faculty were provided with the opportunity to reflect on their performance, the students are then asked to evaluate instruction in relation to these strategic initiatives and a comparison between instructor and student perception of teaching is made. The results are then used to compare full and part time faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate classroom instruction with respect to the initiatives. Required and elective courses are contrasted as well.*

I.INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the process of assessment, from developing a mission statement for a business school at a small private midwestern university to assessing instruction under that mission statement is explored. This study is being conducted in three primary stages.

1. The first stage involved the development and construction of the mission statement for the School of Business at the university. During this process, faculty actively participated in developing the mission and its contents.
2. The second stage consisted of the construction of a survey delivered solely to full-time and adjunct faculty in Spring 2000 and Summer 2000. In this survey, faculty were asked to honestly assess their performance based upon the strategic initiatives. A discussion ensued after the survey results were tabulated to assess the program in its entirety.
3. In the third stage, a discussion ensued in Fall 2000 concerning the results of that survey and how the faculty might attempt to change or adapt their teaching pedagogy in response to survey results.
4. The fourth stage consisted of the construction of a survey delivered to all undergraduate and graduate students and faculty in Spring 2001. Faculty and student responses were compared to determine if expectations with regards to classroom instruction were congruent.

II. LITERATURE SEARCH

Although it has been well documented that finding reliable quantifiable variables to assess teaching excellence has led to the development of student evaluations as a method of assessment, many studies conclude that these student-driven evaluations yield little usable information in assessing teaching and distort, rather than clarify, teaching effectiveness. Studies by Cohen (1981), White (1995), and Marsh and Roche (1997) all indicate that creating reliability measures within a curriculum may be dependent upon a collaborative effort on the part of instructor and student to clearly define and identify the primary factors that contribute to creating a positive learning environment.

With the adoption of a mission-based accreditation standard by the AACSB in the mid-1990s, business schools have been struggling to devise a coherent method to assess teaching effectiveness and research productivity. While many studies suggest the lack of quantifiable variables and the difficulty in tracking alumni over time lends credence to using survey data as a means to assess a program, the use of student evaluations as a measure of teaching excellence can be biased by the academic rigor of a course or instructor enthusiasm rather than material learned.

To date, very few studies adequately assess student perception of teaching excellence because the perspective of the individual instructor's "vision" is not clearly defined. How can a student assess an instructor if the instructor is not clear of his/her objectives? Bosshardt and Watts (2001) are one of the first to attempt to answer this question; however, their study is contingent on the correlation between instructor and student perceptions by evaluating those perceptions simultaneously. It is the contention of this paper that this ineffectiveness may be a response to the lack of time spent by faculty in self-assessment and peer assessment.

III. DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM AND FACULTY

The School of Business is comprised of both an undergraduate and graduate curriculum. In the 2000-2001 academic year, the faculty consisted of 12 full-time professors with a course load of four classes per Fall and Spring semester and approximately two courses during the summer. All full-time faculty teach within the undergraduate and graduate school of business. During the same academic year, approximately 26 adjunct (part-time) instructors taught courses within the undergraduate and graduate school of business, with 21 adjuncts solely teaching graduate courses.

The undergraduate school of business consists of 168 students, both full and part time, majoring in accounting, general business administration, international business, economics, and environmental management. Of these majors, approximately 82% of students declared general business administration as their primary major. Roughly 23 additional students minored in one of the aforementioned subjects.

Within the graduate school of business, 238 students were currently enrolled during the 2000-2001 academic year. Approximately, 67% of those students are general MBA, 21% are CIS/MIS (masters in information sciences), 6% are MSA (masters of science in accounting), and 5.5% are MSOM (masters of science in organizational management).

IV. FACULTY AND STUDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

Spring 2001, faculty and student surveys were administered to a random sample of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level. All surveys were administered in the last three weeks of the session in order to ensure that students had covered material necessary for making an objective analysis of instruction. The response rate for all surveys collected is 58% at the graduate level and 67% at the undergraduate level.

The surveys consisted of a qualitative section and a quantitative section. In the qualitative section, students were asked their academic year, number of extracurricular activities, number of hours of prep for each class per week, and whether they were a transfer student. In comparison, faculty were asked the number of years of teaching and business experience, number of current committees, number of hours spent prepping for a course, and number of conferences attended per year.

In the quantitative section, students and faculty were asked, on a scale of 1 to 5, the same set of questions paralleling the faculty survey administered in Spring 2000 and Summer 2000. If faculty truly assessed their performance in Spring 2000 and Summer 2000, then the scores of select initiatives should increase and these scores should parallel student responses.

When first assessing faculty scores, undergraduate full-time faculty did improve in the areas of technology and the integration of guest speakers into their coursework. Roughly 53% of faculty reported they more frequently (score of 4) used technology (software, simulations, etc.) inside the classroom and nearly 63% more frequently (score of 4 or 5) solicited the use of guest lectures to enhance student learning. In addition, adjunct faculty fared slightly better in attempting to organize tutorial sessions (55% responded with a score of 4 or 5).

When analyzing the student qualitative results, the average number of hours studied per week on a course was 1.5 hours. In accounting and finance, the number of hours studied was slightly higher at 2.2 hours per week. These numbers were approximately the same whether the course was an elective or required for the major. In comparison, faculty reported that they spent about 6.2 hours per week per course in an attempt to update and organize material for the classroom.

At the undergraduate level, the average number of years of teaching experience and business experience was 9.6 years and 8 years respectively. The average full-time teaching load is approximately four courses (graduate and undergraduate) in the Fall and Spring semester and two during the Summer, for a total of 10 courses per year.

In order to determine whether faculty and students perceptions of the type of instruction provided are somewhat equivalent, the following hypotheses were test at the 5% level of significance using a Chi-Squared distribution.

H_0 : There is no difference between the rank assigned to each initiative by the faculty and the rank assigned by the student.

H_1 : There is a difference between the rank assigned to each initiative by the faculty and the rank assigned by the student.

Table I presents the p-values and the results of the test for each strategic initiative for all undergraduate faculty, adjunct faculty, and full-time faculty respectively. Only data for required courses within the major are presented in the table. Some important conclusions can be made from the following table.

1. When reviewing the data, not rejecting the null hypothesis indicated, when additional tests were run, that all faculty scored themselves higher than the assessment of the student in the classroom.
2. Adjunct and full-time faculty did improve in their self-assessment score in terms of the incorporation of ethics into the classroom; however, students tended to evaluate this incorporation with a lower score. The average score by students concerning the first strategic initiative was a modal score of 3 (in comparison to a modal score of 4 and 5 by adjunct and full-time faculty respectively).
3. Both student and full-time faculty assessment of the use of technology in the classroom was similar; however, adjunct faculty tended to view their use of technology with a higher modal score than the general student body.
4. Adjunct faculty and student scores reflect the fact that globalization issues are at the forefront of discussion. 90% of students ranked globalization discussions with adjunct instructors at a 5.
5. Full-time faculty performed well when evaluated by students in the area of student research (initiative #4) and business skill (initiative #6). About 76% of full-time faculty ranked their performance at 4 or more (modal score of 5) whereas about 68% of students ranked this initiative at 4 or more (modal score of 5).

Table I Comparison of Faculty and Student Responses at the Undergraduate Level

Initiative	Undergraduate (All)	Undergraduate (Adjunct)	Undergraduate (Full-Time)
1. Ethics	Reject the null. (p=0.0330)	Reject the null. (p=0.0420)	Reject the null. (p=0.0253)
2. Technology	Reject the null. (p=0.0357)	Reject the null. (p=0.0478)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1527)
3. Globalization	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1527)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1639)	Reject the null. (p=0.0447)
4. Student Research	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1143)	Reject the null. (p=0.0185)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1378)
5. Communication	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1381)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1416)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1215)
6. Business Skill	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1483)	Reject the null. (p=0.0355)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1444)
7. Contemporary Issues	Reject the null. (p=0.0423)	Reject the null. (p=0.0395)	Reject the null. (p=0.0497)
8. Entrepreneurial	Reject the null. (p=0.0442)	Reject the null. (p=0.0348)	Reject the null. (p=0.0397)
9. Student Support	Reject the null. (p=0.0356)	Reject the null. (p=0.0384)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.0233)
10. Adapt curricula.	Reject the null. (p=0.0407)	Reject the null. (p=0.0448)	Reject the null. (p=0.0121)

In an effort to determine how the ranking of the initiatives, the course offerings were subdivided into those that were required by the major and those that were elective courses. In general, intuition from the faculty expects that required courses within the major should exhibit more of the initiatives than elective courses in general. The hypothesis test was designed as follows.

H₀: There is no difference between the rank assigned to each initiative by the faculty and the rank assigned by the student with regards to required courses.

H₁: There is a difference between the rank assigned to each initiative by the faculty and the rank assigned by the student with regards to required courses.

Table II Comparison of Faculty and Student Responses at the Undergraduate Level (Required Courses)

Initiative	Undergraduate (All)	Undergraduate (Adjunct)	Undergraduate (Full-Time)
1. Ethics	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1832)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1397)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.2216)
2. Technology	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1822)	Reject the null. (p=0.0238)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1925)
3. Globalization	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1211)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1486)	Reject the null. (p=0.0347)
4. Student Research	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1432)	Reject the null. (p=0.0428)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1685)
5. Communication	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1925)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1632)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.2433)
6. Business Skill	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1563)	Reject the null. (p=0.0466)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1843)
7. Contemporary Issues	Reject the null. (p=0.0322)	Reject the null. (p=0.0227)	Reject the null. (p=0.0411)
8. Entrepreneurial	Reject the null. (p=0.0465)	Reject the null. (p=0.0418)	Reject the null. (p=0.0364)
9. Student Support	Reject the null. (p=0.0439)	Reject the null. (p=0.0338)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.0447)
10. Adapt curricula.	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1447)	Reject the null. (p=0.0337)	Cannot reject the null. (p=0.1744)

Most notably, the ranking of ethics by students is similar to the scores indicated by full-time and adjunct faculty. When required courses are isolated in the sample, roughly 82% ranked the incorporation of ethics at a "4" in full-time faculty courses as opposed to 59% at "3" in adjunct faculty courses. In addition, the use of technology particularly by full-time faculty became more in tune to student perception.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the process of assessment, from developing a mission statement for a business school at a small private midwestern university to assessing instruction under that mission statement was explored in this paper. When faculty are first asked to assess their performance in the classroom and provided with a forum to discuss their strengths and weaknesses with their colleagues, evidence from this survey suggests that, after evaluation, faculty and student **perception** about the content of classroom instruction start to converge. Once faculty are able to see, through the students' eyes, whether the student identified with the

instructor's example of globalization or use of technology, then faculty can build on this information to effectively evaluate classroom teaching.

In this survey, it is not expected that every course should attain scores of 4 or 5 for every category listed; however, it is expected that a faculty's **perception** of his or her incorporation should be measured against the student. If there is a divergence in perception, the instructor should, with the help of the students, attempt to analyze the development of the teaching pedagogy he or she has set forth.

Works Cited

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