

MBA Assessment
Submitted August 2008
Dr. Liberatore, MBA Director

Goals

Millikin University's Master of Business Administration degree is a unified curriculum rather than a core and collection of elective courses. This focused and integrated style of program is designed to develop critical thinking skills and prepare men and women for positions of leadership in today's complex business world. The curriculum is intentional with the objective of developing a business leader with broad generalist skills, a person who can analyze a business situation from different perspectives and then exercise the judgment required to create a solution.

We expect MBA candidates to work hard and gain an integrated knowledge of business disciplines. MBA candidates will;

1. gain an understanding of the changing global business and economic system;
2. consider and clarify their ethical responsibilities as a business leader;
3. gain a solid understanding of basic business disciplines;
4. demonstrate the ability to apply business theory and concepts to practical business situations; that is, MBA candidates should be able to see the integration of business disciplines and knowledge and be able to diagnosis and prescribe;
5. demonstrate the ability to communicate facts and ideas in written and verbal formats using professional presentation skills; and
6. be able to work in a team environment and demonstrate planning and organizing skills.

To accomplish stated goals, the MBA program

1. delivers an extensive course on globalization and takes students abroad to study at a well respected graduate business school;
2. delivers a thoughtful and self-reflecting course on ethics;
3. has a deliberate curriculum designed to move each cohort of students through core business disciplines;
4. uses cases extensively to develop, demonstrate and test analytical and reasoning skills;
5. requires class presentations, oral exams and capstone presentations in corporate reports and business plans; and
6. organizes students in teams that are reformed with different members after each 10-week unit.

A successful graduate, of whom we have had many, leaves the program with a deeper understanding of business matters, sensitivity to their role as a leader, and greater skills and confidence to advance their careers or business. Many of our graduates move on rapidly to higher levels of organizational responsibility in domestic and international assignments.

Snapshot of the Program

The MBA program is designed to be both flexible and personal. Class sizes remain selectively small in a typical range of 25 to 32 students. The MBA classroom, designed to provide a professional learning environment, has conference tables to accommodate the team structure of the program. The technology is state of the art with teleconferencing capabilities and lectures are video recorded for latter access and review by students.

Ideal candidates for this MBA program are highly motivated professionals who are in leadership positions, seek leadership positions in an organization, or aspire to lead their own organization. Both academic and professional successes are important criteria for selection into the program. Likewise, diversity of perspectives is essential for student learning in a team environment and an important component to a student's application.

The cohort structure of the curriculum is designed to maximize interaction of participants and integration of course material. The MBA classes develop a strong work ethic and cooperative learning styles. In general, the MBA is designed for managers and leaders and not technicians. Courses were selected that focus on the bigger picture of business, how systems fit together, how questions are formulated and how decisions are made. The curriculum starts with values and cultures and ends with leadership, management, strategy and planning. These bookends surround the basic business disciplines of marketing, accounting and finance.

Certainly the Millikin MBA graduate is schooled in finance, in marketing, in operations- in the traditional functional areas of business. But the answers to business dilemmas rarely lie in only one discipline. The successful solutions lie in the intersection of the disciplines or functions within business. The MBA teaches how to see those intersections, how to frame quantitative and qualitative questions, and how to articulate comprehensive answers to complex problems. To accomplish this goal faculty rely heavily on casework as a means of strengthening analytical and reasoning skills and in developing the integration of material and knowledge. Presentation of results strengthens professional presentation skills.

One unique aspect of the course design process has been that the MBA graduate faculty review each course providing advice and consent on the content and coordination of material. In addition, the faculty paired-up in each unit coordinates material, schedules and work as much as possible.

The faculty are seasoned practitioners with good reputations, as verified by the end of unit student evaluations. In addition, a three-week survey is administered in each course to seek input and guidance for the class on the appropriateness and direction of the course. This customer feedback allows for corrections and minimizes conflicts and disappointments.

The MBA program seeks to bring into our education process the experience, insights and lessons of outstanding business executives. Speakers are regularly integrated into courses.

Unit MB 501 Review & Development

The program starts with business simulation model to develop business knowledge. Students are organized in teams and compete against teams across the US. Once a round of simulation is completed each team receives business reports including the financial statement of the firm. From this point students are taught the basics of financial statements, accounting concepts, marketing and production.

Unit 1: Setting a Strong Foundation

- 1 - Personal Values & Business Ethics
- 2 - Globalization & US Business

The first two courses are designed to give students an appreciation of global business and cultures and to assess their value paradigms as leaders. Since all leadership decisions ultimately depend on one's beliefs and value system the MBA curriculum starts with values and ends with management and leadership.

Unit 2: Understanding the Language of Business

1 - Accounting

2 – Introduction to Finance

Effective Personal Development Practicum

Accounting and finance provide the basic language of business. Leading and managing in any business requires good financial information and the ability to use that information to make decisions. This unit develops and solid foundation in understanding the accounting and financial accounts of the enterprise.

Unit 3: Marketing & Financial Information

1 – Marketing Analysis & Management

2 - Cases in Finance

"Organizational Structure and Performance" Practicum

It is the information age. The organization, dissemination, and use of financial and marketing information within an organization provide an essential competitive edge for firms. This unit develops financial analytical skills and a solid understanding of marketing thinking.

Unit 4: Leading People, Managing Processes

1 - Leading Organizations

2 - Production and Process Management

“Delegation and Motivation” Practicum

Peter Ducker describes the majority of today's labor force as knowledge workers. Expanding levels of education, training, and income create a labor force much different from our industrial past. The emphasis on participation, balanced lives, and personal fulfillment elevates the role of leadership in organizations. Leading people and managing processes is a central theme of this unit. This work builds on the initial work in ethics and takes students back to the basics of the MBA – becoming better managers and leaders.

The third practicum builds on the first two by carrying personal organization and team processes to the natural next step of sharing work through delegation and motivation.

Unit 5: Business Decisions

1 - Business Policy & Simulation

2 - Business Plans/Presentation

“Effective Personal Leadership” Practicum

Do you know a good business decision when you see one? While the principles of good decision-making are integral to the course throughout the MBA program, at this stage of development we step back from the individual areas of the business to examine how policies, strategies and decisions affect business performance. A more comprehensive view of business decisions, from the view of leaders, is the focus.

The practicum caps the sequence of practicums by focusing on what one believes as a manager since in many ways management is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

International Experience

Students study abroad as the final experience of the MBA program tying back to the ethics and cultures courses at the beginning of the program. The international experience at a top ranked business school centers on five days of in-class instruction and work.

Assessment

Overall Assessment: Green

Testing for Disciplinary Knowledge and Understanding

Assessment: Green and Yellow

The MBA program initiated nationally based testing of students with the class of 2004 (entering in January 2003). Two tests have been administered, both provided by the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

1. Students are tested at the completion of the MBA review session, a three-week curriculum presented in January of each year prior to the commencement of MBA coursework. This is a mandatory session for all MBA candidates. The ETS Major Field Test in Business, which is given to graduating college seniors, is administered.
2. Students are again tested at the completion of the MBA program using the ETS Major Field Test in MBA.

Class	ETS Major Field Test in Business			Major Field Test in MBA		
	Millikin	National		Millikin	National	
	Median	Median	Std. Dev.	Median	Median	Std. Dev
2004	152.7			258.26		
2005	166.5			253.38	250	15.8
2006	168	152	13.9	256.25	250	15.8
2007	167.36	152	13.9	255.00	250	15.8
2008	164			250		
Assessment	Green			Yellow		

The Millikin MBA classes have consistently scored a standard deviation above the national median score in the Major Field Test in Business. In 2008, the class scored in the top 5% of 381 testing universities. This data supports the experiences and belief of the MBA faculty that many incoming students are sufficiently versed in basic business knowledge and that the MBA review session is effective in creating a base level of business knowledge for all students.

The MBA classes have scored above the national median in the MBA Field Test except for 2008. We believe that the class should score higher and intend to review the results and set a goal for scoring above the national average.

Assessing Mastery of Course Content

Assessment: Green

Case presentation, written and oral exams, and projects in each course are used to evaluate performance and to gauge the extent of knowledge gained. All course final examinations have a portion devoted to a comprehensive coverage of content learning.

The MBA faculty expect solid graduate work from students and the grading culture of the program is clear among faculty and students. Hard work, a prerequisite in all courses, is not sufficient to earn a high grade. Grades are based on the mastery of course content as judged by each professor.

Year	Undergraduate GPA	MBA GPA
2003	3.40	3.53
2004	3.23	3.7
2005	3.00	3.5
2006	3.40	3.5
2007	3.27	3.60
2008	3.20	3.50
2009	3.36	

In addition to the overall course grade, assessment of the mastery of course content includes an extensive number of cases studies, presentations, oral exams and presentations.

Assessing Integration of Knowledge and Professional Presentation Skills

Assessment: Green

In addition to the extensive use of cases throughout the curriculum, two capstone courses - Business Planning and Strategic Management – serve to assess the integration of knowledge and to demonstrate presentation skills. The Business Planning Course requires teams of students to develop a comprehensive, in depth business plan for some specific business event, such as starting a new business, developing a new product line, acquiring new assets, a merger, etc. These plans are presented to the MBA class, MBA Faculty and invited judges who assess the presentations for content and professional delivery. This assessment evaluates the extent of imbedded business knowledge deriving from coursework, presentation skills and professional demeanor.

The following table summarizes the grades for the past several years. Solid 'B' work, 85 or greater is viewed as professional level graduate work and is in the green zone.

Business Plan Grades

Teams	2005	2006	2007	2008
1	73.3	78.4	92.7	80.5
2	89.4	80.5	79.8	96.5
3	87.6	82.2	96.1	86.1
4	90.9	91.8	86.7	88.2
5	89.1	81.8	92.7	90.1
6	88.7	78.3		84.5
7		85.7		
Average	86.5	82.7	89.6	87.7
Ranges				
Red	<80			
Yellow	80-85		Yellow	
Green	>85	Green		Green

Teams in the Strategic Management course compete in a nationwide business simulation game that requires students to diagnose business conditions, create strategies and prescribe actions to outperform competitors. Students must draw on all their course work and analytical reasoning in the competition. In addition, each team is required to deliver a formal corporate report at conclusion of the course.

Assessing the Success of Delivery

Assessment: Yellow

Each course is evaluated at its third of ten lectures to assess if the instructor is successfully meeting the objectives of the course and fulfilling the expectations of students. Adjustments can be made at this juncture.

In addition, classes and instructors are evaluated at the completion of each course. The following table shows the evaluations for calendar year 2007. The bottom of the table compares the overall average scores for 2005 and 2007. Overall evaluations for instructor and course have fallen from green to yellow over the period. Following exit interviews, we have changed instructors for the Marketing course which should in turn strengthen the Strategy Course since they were taught by the same instructor.

Summary of Student Evaluations

CY 2007						
	Course Organization	Communication	Overall Instructor	Overall Course	Ave. Instructor + Course	
Ethics						
Globalization						
Accounting	3.57	2.82	3.55	3.4		Green
Finance I	4.05	3.84	3.52	3.57		Yellow
Marketing	3.8	3.74	3.63	3.68		Yellow
Finance II	3.77	3.98	3.81	3.57		Yellow
Leadership	4.34	4.41	4.47	4.31		Green
Management	4.1	4.08	4.09	3.95		Yellow
Strategy	3.25	3.32	2.89	2.63		Red
Planning	3.83	4.07	4	3.78		Yellow
International	4.11	4.06	4.25	4.5		Green
Overall 2007	3.87	3.81	3.8	3.71	3.76	Yellow
Overall 2005					4.19	Green

Grading Scale

Strongly Agree	5	Green
Agree	4	Green
Undecided	3	Yellow
Disagree	2	Red
Strongly Disagree	1	Red

Improvement Plans

Student course assessments are evaluated by the MBA faculty (including the Director). The faculty makes judgments about areas for improvement. In addition, the MBA Director conducts an exit interview with each graduating class to solicit recommendations. As a result of the assessments and exit interviews we have made a number of major changes in the program and replaced faculty due to poor student evaluations.

Course assessments and exit interviews will continue to provide feedback to faculty on a continuous basis and be used for continuous improvement in the MBA program.

Program Evolution

The following table summarizes the changes that have been made to improve the program since its inception in 2000.

Year	Major Changes
2001	First year
2002	Revised finance course
2003	Changed review session format to business simulation - CapSim Added new finance professor
2004	Expanded Economics Review in Review Session Added finance and dropped e-business course Changed Review Session exit test to ETS Field Test in Business Added MBA exit exam, ETS Field Test in MBA Changed practicum content to focus on management skills Added Executive Lecturer Series – expanded speakers Raised tuition to accommodate foreign study
2005	Added International Study and required a class case study and presentation as part of the experience WHU Germany; Peking University, Beijing; Fudan University, Shanghai Hired a second finance faculty
2006	Re-form teams after each unit for greater diversity of experiences in class
2007	Revised Management Course in Unit 4 with input from Caterpillar engineers Instituted and mandatory review session for the MBA program at the end of Unit 5
2008	Expanded Accounting Instruction in Review Session Moved Accounting course from Unit 3 to Unit 2 Hired a new Marketing Professor
2009	

Plans

The latest exit exam recommendations are reflected in the above noted improvements for 2008.

The following are four near term improvement goals.

1. Hire a new professor for the management course in Unit 4 and move its focus toward a management and human resources perspective rather than its current operations management orientation.
2. Expand the accounting instruction in the Review Session and strengthen the end of program review.
3. Increase the MBA exit exam scores.
4. Continue the international study but select one university relationship and curriculum to repeat for several years.