

## MISSION-DRIVEN CURRICULUM: A BUSINESS SCHOOL CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

This paper describes the process by which a business school's faculty has been developing a mission-driven curriculum over the past year. It is hoped that sharing this case study will encourage others to pursue this approach.

Curriculum development models which reflect the contemporary continuous quality improvement, market-oriented model of management have been suggested by Mayo and Miciak (1991) and Giacobbe and Segal (1994). These models incorporate stakeholder input, peer comparisons, faculty values, faculty resources, and performance gap analysis. VanAuken (1991) emphasizes the role of the school's mission in the process.

### CASE STUDY

The business school at a small, traditionally liberal arts oriented, private, religiously affiliated university is the subject of this study. The school has about 20 faculty serving about 350 undergraduate majors and about 175 part-time graduate students.

A six member faculty taskforce was charged with identifying "measurable outcomes" for each of our programs. The taskforce included the dean and faculty who represented the broader faculty and, more importantly, who had information, skills, or perspectives related to implementing a continuous improvement approach.

The group used the model shown in Figure 1 to guide its work. During Fall and Winter terms, the taskforce focused on the Situation-Analysis Phase. It used an iterative process of drafting and gathering feedback from stakeholders to prepare a proposed revision of the mission statement and articulate objectives and outcomes. The taskforce then presented the proposal to the full faculty for adoption.

The initial analysis activities occurred in the latter part of the Spring Quarter and over the summer. This included surveys of current graduates, alumni, employers, and others in the business community.

In parallel, the faculty were surveyed regarding how well or how much they addressed the identified outcomes in the courses they taught. This "curriculum map" was then analyzed for areas of most and least coverage.

A gap analysis was used to set action priorities and framed the discussion of strategic initiatives for this year. The four action priorities were: verbal communication skills, technology skills, faith integration, and world of work awareness/ professional socialization. Actions are being undertaken to address each of these areas.

The taskforce's work concluded with the recommendation of these decision priorities. Implementation and ongoing oversight of the process has been handed-off to a newly created continuous improvement committee. The details of curriculum revision are being addressed by the undergraduate and graduate program committees. These committees are studying curriculum revisions and will be systematically reviewing courses for appropriate coverage of outcomes, especially in these four areas.

We have learned some valuable lessons from this process. Our experience mimicks that of other schools which have been similarly involved in implementing the continuous improvement approach. The renewed commitment many faculty have found through this process has made the time and effort worthwhile.

### REFERENCES ON REQUEST

FIGURE 1  
Continuous Improvement Based Curriculum Development Model

