

Eller MSA Program Learning Objectives & Measurements

Updated June 2015

Ref#	Overall Objective	Specific Learning Objective	Measurement	Timing	Responsible	F14/515 Results	F13/S14 Results	F12/S13 Results
1	Critical Thinking	Understands the industry environment and company strategies. Compares firm performance, risks and growth. Performs valuation analyses and identify investment opportunities for investors.	ACCT554I Project	Fall	Trombley	11.3/12	11.3/12	N/A - New degree program
2	Critical Thinking	Demonstrates the ability to articulate an argument, evaluate the quality of arguments and evidence, and construct and defend the position taken.	ACCT521I	Fall	Lee	7.2/9	N/A	N/A - New degree program
3	Communication	Demonstrates the ability to effectively prepare and deliver a professional presentation.	ACCT580I	Fall	Broderson	21/25	54.5/60	N/A - New degree program
4	Communication	Expresses written information accurately and in an audience appropriate manner with conciseness and clarity.	ACCT580I	Fall	Broderson	22.9/25	16.3/20	N/A - New degree program
5	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides and receives feedback, ideas, and instruction in a professional manner. - Organizes tasks and delegates responsibility to complete collaborative projects in a timely manner. - Explains the impact of each team member (including self) on the collaborative project and the role each member plays. 	ACCT531I	Fall	Michas	3.9/5	4-5/5	N/A - New degree program
6	Technical Knowledge	Demonstrates understanding of graduate level core discipline subject matter	Comprehensive MSA exam	Fall/Spring	Barefield	97%	100%	N/A - New degree program
7	Technology	Demonstrates the ability to use business software and technology (tax, audit & general ledger) appropriately.	ACCT572I Smithville Project	Fall	Borowec	18.6/20	18.5/20	N/A - New degree program
8	Ethics/ Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifies ethical dilemmas and develops appropriate courses of action that consider the well-being of others and society. - Evaluates the role of legal and social responsibility in business decisions. 	ACCT531I Case Study	Fall	Michas	8.8/10	Subjective evaluation	N/A - New degree program
9	Outcomes/ Student Satisfaction	Able to articulate program objectives and assess whether those objectives were achieved at the end of the program.	Student Assessment Results	Fall/Spring	Barefield	6.8/7.0	5.8/7.0	N/A - New degree program

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
FALL 2014**

PROGRAM: MSA **OBJECTIVE:** Critical Thinking
Assessment Tool: Evaluation Form **Administered in:** ACCT554I (Trombley)
Sample Size: 100% (9 out of 9 teams)

Description of Assessment and Results: Students work in two or three person teams to compare two companies from a selected industry. Analysis can be presented in written or oral presentation form. Teams must select from among various analysis tools developed in the class and provide a well-supported recommendation regarding investment potential of the two companies. The team projects are assessed based on critical thinking criteria, as follows.

Critical Thinking Criteria:

C1: Team concisely discussed the industry, its products and its markets. Team made a convincing assessment of the major issues facing the industry and development of expectations regarding future growth and profitability.

C2: Team developed and presented analyses evaluating and comparing profitability, financial condition and earnings quality of companies in the industry. Team made a convincing quantitative comparison of the intrinsic values of companies in the industry.

C3: Team made explicit recommendations regarding investment potential of companies in the industry. Recommendations were well supported and conflicting factors were appropriately weighted and reconciled.

Scores: Lowest=0, Highest=4, Max = 12

Team #	Names	C1	C2	C3	Total
1	Redacted	4.0	4.0	3.0	11.0
2	Redacted	4.0	3.0	4.0	11.0
3	Redacted	4.0	3.5	4.0	11.5
4	Redacted	4.0	3.5	4.0	11.5
5	Redacted	4.0	3.5	4.0	11.5
6	Redacted	4.0	4.0	4.0	12.0
7	Redacted	3.0	3.0	4.0	10.0
8	Redacted	4.0	3.5	4.0	11.5
9	Redacted	4.0	4.0	4.0	12.0

10					
11					
MEAN		3.9	3.6	3.9	11.3

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results:

Overall we are happy with student performance on the critical thinking dimensions of the assignment. All the scores were 3.0 or above on a four point scale, indicating a high level of performance. We also believe that this assessment provides a reasonable perspective on student skills related to critical thinking.

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
Spring 2015**

PROGRAM: MSA

OBJECTIVE: Critical Thinking: Demonstrates the ability to articulate an argument, evaluate the quality of arguments and evidence, and construct and defend a position.

Assessment Tool: Quizzes

Administered in: ACCT 521I

Description of Assessment and Results:

Each week, ACCT 521I students watch a short video (5 min.) then take a quiz based on the video. The video shows actors presenting a scene related to everyday conflicts in the business world. The video is subtitled to help students who speak English as a second language (ESL). After students watch the video, the instructor distributes the quiz which includes a paragraph summarizing the facts presented in the video. The quiz asks open-ended questions such as: (a) Explain the relevant law(s); (b) Apply the law to the facts to argue for X that Y is liable for violation of Z; (c) Explain what a court is most likely to decide regarding Y's liability for violation of Z; (d) Explain what Y should have done differently to avoid liability. The quizzes are "open book," which means that students can use their textbooks but no other sources of information to answer the questions. The purpose of the quizzes is not to test students' ability to memorize vocabulary terms or laws, because in real life, people can look up those terms and laws.

The purpose of the quizzes is to test students' ability to recognize potential legal problems in the given facts, find the relevant law from a trusted source (the textbook), make a logical argument from a particular subjective point of view, assess the likely success of that argument from an objective point of view, and explain the lessons learned from the process.

Aside from students' scores on the quizzes, I assessed a sample of students on a sample of quizzes according the following items to ensure the overall learning objective is accomplished:

- **Did the student adequately evaluate the quality of arguments made by others?**
- **Did the student articulate his/her own argument in a clear and orderly way?**
- **Did the student provide relevant reasons to support his/her viewpoint?**

This course is difficult for ESL students because it involves unfamiliar content and requires strong English language skills. The first quiz I assessed was given in the third week of the semester. The second quiz I assessed was given in the fourth week of the semester. The third quiz was given at the end of the semester. **There was a dramatic improvement in critical thinking skills over the course of the semester.** By the end of the semester, the majority of students were successful with the quizzes and able to demonstrate their ability to think critically about the scenarios presented to them. The average score for the third quiz was **80%**.

Evaluation of Quality of the Assessment Tool:

The assessment tool provides "real-life" scenarios that the students must analyze. They are individual assignments which provide each student an opportunity to practice analyzing others' arguments and creating and defending their own arguments.

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results:

Overall, the students improved dramatically in their abilities to think critically about the scenarios presented to them. The highest average occurred in the area of the students' ability to give reasons to support their own viewpoint. The lowest average occurred in the area of the students' ability to evaluate the quality of arguments made by others.

Assessment Tool/Rubric

MSA2a

Criteria	Level of Achievement		
	1	2	3
Question 1. Did the student adequately evaluate the	No evaluation.	Incomplete, but some evaluation.	Significant evaluation.
Question 2. Did the student articulate his/her own	Unclear articulation.	Somewhat clear & orderly articulation.	Completely clear and orderly articulation.
Question 3. Did the student provide relevant	Few or no relevant reasons.	Some, but not enough relevant reasons.	Sufficient relevant reasons.

Assessment Results

	Question 1				Question 2				Question 3				Total
	Quiz #3	Quiz #4	Quiz #15	Total	Quiz #3	Quiz #4	Quiz #15	Total	Quiz #3	Quiz #4	Quiz #15	Total	
Max possible	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9	27
Student #													
1	2	3	2	7	2	3	2	7	2	3	2	7	21
2	2	3	2	7	2	3	2	7	2	3	2	7	21
3	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	4	12
4	1	3	3	7	1	3	3	7	1	3	3	7	21
5	2	2	3	7	2	3	3	8	2	3	3	8	23
6	3	2	3	8	3	2	3	8	3	2	3	8	24
7	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	6	18
8	3	2	3	8	3	2	3	8	3	2	3	8	24
9	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	5	1	2	2	5	14
10	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	5	1	2	2	5	14
11	1	2	2	5	1	2	2	5	1	2	2	5	15
12	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	6	18
13	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9	27
14	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	6	18
15	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9	27
AVERAGE	1.93	2.13	2.40	6.47	1.93	2.33	2.40	6.67	1.93	2.33	2.40	6.67	19.80
	64.44%	71.11%	80.00%	71.85%	64.44%	77.78%	80.00%	74.07%	64.44%	77.78%	80.00%	74.07%	73.33%

Quiz #3 total (overall average): 5.80 /9
 Quiz #4 total (overall average): 6.80 /9
 Quiz #15 total (overall average): 7.20 /9

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

Fall 2014

PROGRAM: MSA

OBJECTIVE: Communication Skills

Assessment Tool: In-Class Presentation

Administered in: ACCT580I

Sample Size: 19 students

Description of Assessment and Results:

This assignment requires students to select an accounting concept, appropriate to first-year Master's students, and present it to their classmates and instructor. Students must clearly begin with the overview of the concept, explain the details of the concept, give examples, and sum it by repeating the bottom line. The presenters were to use appropriate body language by moving out away from the computer and engaging the audience.

The topic choices available to the students were as follows:

- Career opportunities in accounting
- The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners
- The International Accounting Standards Board
- The *FASB Accounting Standards Codification*
- 2011 changes to the content and format of the CPA exam

The overall learning objectives:

- Demonstrates the ability to deliver an effective business presentation
- Effectively prepare information for an audience of non-accountants using simple terminology

The grade on the assignment was broken into two parts: Presentation, and Oral Presenting Skills. The first assessed the critical thinking, organization, logic, and slide design of the presentation itself. The second focused on the presenters' use of good eye contact, volume, prosody, and body language. Overall, I assessed the students according the following specific objectives in support of the overall learning objectives:

- Organization of presentation showcased simplicity and clarity that made the content easy to follow with relevant examples
- Visual presentation effectively conveyed, supported, and reinforced the spoken and written messages
- Explanation of concepts used concise and accurate language and was devoid of excess verbiage
- Body language, prosody, and eye contact was engaging and interesting with minimal error interference.

Overall, students were successful on the project, both in terms of their grade for the overall presentation and their actual presenting skills. That said, the majority of the points lost were on the second portion, notably the eye contact and body language with

about 1/4 of the class choosing to stand behind the computer monitor and make minimal eye contact with the audience. The highest scores on the presentation content were on critical thinking and structure. The highest total score was a 25/25 and the lowest a 20/25 with an average score of 21.

Evaluation of Quality of the Assessment Tool:

This assignment serves as a capstone in the ACCT580I course. Students are required to incorporate information and accounting concepts and present them in a way that a layman could understand. They are supposed to demonstrate not only a mastery of the concept and the organizational strategy for effective PowerPoints, but also the softer skills of presenting like eye contact, body language, volume, and prosody. Throughout the semester, assignments and lectures address specific pieces of the overall presentation with an exaggerated focus on what makes a presentation understandable to an audience unfamiliar with accounting terms. This focus on simplicity and concision in language and content make this an appropriate tool to assess students' learning of the key objectives.

Evaluation of Time and Place of Assessment:

Since the assessment occurs at the end of the semester, it is an appropriate time to assess student learning and should not be changed.

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results:

I am satisfied with student's performance on this assessment. They demonstrated the ability to assimilate a significant amount of information into a concise presentation. Just like last year, challenges included staying within the tight time limitation and articulating clear transitions between topics. The time limitation impacted the score received for the financial performance assessment measure. Students wanted to include all they learned about the company, rather than focusing on the items that matter most. I will spend more time focusing on helping students identify critical points in future semesters.

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Fall 2014

PROGRAM: MSA **OBJECTIVE:** Communications
Student can write clearly & concisely

Assessment Tool: Take-home writing assignment

Administered in: ACCT 580I

Description of Assessment and Results: Writing assignments in this course focused on strategies most often used in the business writing. The instructor evaluated student responses for the composition of a professional letter intended to persuade one's accounting firm's executives to donate to the local symphony as a way of gaining new clients. Included in the grading process are five considerations noted below:

- Letter uses appropriate tone for writing to bosses
- Argument is built indirectly with the 'ask' coming later
- Structure is indirect, yet the writing is direct with little extraneous material (concise writing)
- Sentence structures are strong and grammar and transitions are correct and effective
- Document design is effective and follows the AIDA indirect persuasive strategy organization

Individual average scores ranged from 20-25 out of 25 possible points. The class overall average was 22.9/25.

Evaluation of Quality of the Assessment Tool: Evaluation of communications skills on the stated dimensions, although subjective, are informed by the rubric with which students have more than a passing familiarity. In addition, students are well informed of the instructor's expectations with respect to writing quality. The assignment is typical of the writing they are expected to produce in this class, therefore this tool is appropriate.

Evaluation of Time and Place of Assessment: All students must write this assignment and follow not only the guidelines set out in the task, but the writing rubric. This task is standard and comes as the final major writing assignment thus assessing their writing abilities at the course's end.

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results: It is important to note the demographic in this class when reviewing the results of this exercise. The class consisted of all international students with English as a second language. Even the lowest scores were passing grade; in addition, the improvement from their first assignments were measurable. We can evaluate writing quality in accounting classes and emphasize its importance to students, but we must recognize inherent limitations on our ability to teach writing quality in our classes. Grammar was a concern as it was regularly the lowest scoring portion of the writing rubric. It was decided that for further courses, the rubric would need to be modified from its 5% of the overall total to 15% or even higher. Student responses that are grammatically challenged are unacceptable in any professional environment, thus our intention to place more emphasis on the importance of correct grammar by recalibrating the rubric.

**Department of Accounting
Assurance of Learning Evaluation Form
Fall 2014**

Learning Objective:

Collaboration - Provides and receives feedback, ideas and instruction in a professional manner, organizes tasks and delegates responsibility to complete collaborative projects in a timely manner, and explains the impact of each team member, including self, on the collaborative project and role each member plays

Measurement:

ACCT 531I - Team Case Groups and Evaluations

Number of Students: 10

Responsible:

Paul N. Michas

Description:

Students were formed into groups of two students to complete three written case deliverables throughout the semester, with the knowledge given in the syllabus that they would have the opportunity to evaluate each of their team members near the end of the semester. The groups for each of the three cases were comprised of different students so that no student worked with another student more than once during the semester. The first two cases were different for each group, and cases were generally drawn from publications in the academic journal *Issues in Accounting Education*. The third case was one where groups took on the role of either the auditor or client during the final phase of an audit where material misstatements adjustments are negotiated between the client and audit firm partner. The case used was Johnstone and Muzatko (2002). Grades for the cases were a combined group grade (all students received the same grade). Consequently, students were incentivized to work together, solve case problems and as well as any interpersonal issues that arose between themselves. Further, each group was required to give a class presentation for the first two cases and bring the class into an interactive discussion of the case (i.e. it was *not* a one-way presentation where the presenting group was doing all the speaking).

Evaluation:

Near the end of the semester, students were asked to evaluate each of their fellow group members by answering the following two questions:

- 1) Did this student provide and receive feedback, ideas, and instruction in a professional manner?
- 2) Did this student organize tasks and delegate responsibility to complete cases in a timely manner?

If the answer to a question was "no," the student was asked to provide a brief explanation. Finally, each student was asked to evaluate each team member by choosing one of the following:

- 5 - Exceeded reasonable expectations and truly went "above and beyond"
- 4 - Contributed their "fair share" of the case work and their work was generally of strong quality
- 3 - Contributed, but they could have worked harder or the work could have been of higher quality
- 2 - Contributed noticeably less than their "fair share" and the quality of their work was not strong
- 1 - Egregiously failed to contribute, was a "free rider"

These evaluations were completely confidential and provided to me with the understanding I would discuss them with nobody.

Conclusion:

Evaluations were returned by every student the class and there some variation in the evaluations. However, the vast majority of students received a 4 on the evaluation scale noted above, with one student receiving a 5 and two students receiving a 3. The average was 3.94. In one case a student pointed out specifically where they believed a fellow team member did not contribute as much as they could have. In summary, the use of groups throughout the semester as well as the advanced knowledge that all students would have the opportunity to evaluate their fellow team members led to, in my opinion, an atmosphere where students were motivated to contribute to the group, both in the ways outlined by the Assurance of Learning guidelines, as well as beyond those guidelines.

Reference:

Johnstone, K. M., and S. R. Muzatko. 2002. Resolving Difficult Accounting Issues: A Case Study in Client-Auditor Interaction. *Issues in Accounting Education* 17 (1): 27-39

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
FALL 2014/SPRING 2015**

PROGRAM: Master of Science in Accounting **OBJECTIVE:** Technical Knowledge
Assessment Tool: MSA Exam **Administered in:** Final semester in program

Prepared by: Dean Barefield

Description of Assessment and Results: Graduating Master of Science in Accounting (MSA) students must successfully complete a comprehensive examination, given near the end of their last semester. The exam consists of eight sets of questions, each from a separate graduate-level accounting course. The student must answer five of the eight sets of questions in a three-hour period. To pass the exam, the students must receive an overall average on the multiple choice questions of 70%. A student that gets less than 35 questions overall correct may retake the exam, again answering questions from the same classes as the first attempt at the exam. Individual results are summarized, with percentage of each outcome reported, including retake outcomes.

Over the two semester period of Fall 2014 through Spring 2015, 29 students took the MSA exam with 17 students taking the exam in the fall and 12 in the spring.

In the fall semester, 16 students passed the exam on the first attempt. The remaining student failed to pass the exam on the second attempt; however, he/she did come back and pass the exam in the following semester.

In the spring semester, 11 passed the exam on the first attempt. The student who retook the exam failed their second attempt. He/she is registered for a course in the summer and will retake the exam at the completion of that session.

Overall pass rate: $28/29 = 97\%$

Evaluation of Quality of the Assessment Tool: The MSA exam has been administered to our program graduates since the inception of the MSA program. Requiring answers to questions from five separate graduate-level accounting courses provides a comprehensive examination experience. This tool allows students to demonstrate their technical expertise in the five topics selected. Students are cognizant of the exam's importance to their successful completion of degree requirements and of its reputation for rigor. They give serious attention to their preparations for the exam. A cross-section of accounting faculty is responsible for writing individual questions. No recommendations are noted at this time.

Evaluation of Time and Place of Assessment: The exam is administered approximately three weeks before graduation to provide time for grading and recording the completion of degree requirements. Students are provided a single three-hour time period to complete the proctored exam. Scheduling the exam as close as possible to graduation provides the best level of assessment. We have no recommendations to improve the administration of the exam.

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results: The results observed during this year indicate that our students are learning the relevant material and are able to maintain that knowledge. It has a similar concept to the CPA exam where the students are tested on a broad range of topics that they mastered while in this program. The range of individual grades reflects the rigor of the questions and the expectations of the faculty. Statistics are kept on the success rate by question for each of the subjects. This data is reviewed and the results and recommendations are provided to faculty to apply to future tests when results fall outside of the expected range. We are planning to maintain both the rigor and high expectations with this as the cumulative piece to the students' Master's Degree.

Department of Accounting
Assurance of Learning Evaluation Results
Accounting 572i – Governmental and Non-Profit Accounting
Fall 2014

Program: Masters of Accounting

Objective: *Software Skills* - The student can effectively use general ledger software applications. This includes an understanding of the relationship between journal entries, general ledgers, trial balance reports, and financial statements.

Assessed Tool: General Ledger Package in the Smithville Simulated City Project

Administered in: Accounting 572i

Description of Assessment and Results: Students were assigned a project where they utilized a general ledger software application to manage financial transactions for a simulated city. The simulation corresponds with the textbook used in the class, and covers the first 70% of the semester. The students were required to produce journal entries, general ledgers, trial balances, and financial statements for multiple governmental funds. Students were asked to submit a well-organized package of information generated from the general ledger software package as well as Excel-based financial statements.

Apart from the student's grade for this project, they were assessed based on four attributes. These attributes were:

1. Submitting a well organized and fully documented package of reports
2. Making the required journal entries and any adjusting entries if necessary
3. Successfully producing trial balance reports for both governmental funds (modified accrual) and government wide financial statements (full accrual)
4. Submitting a complete set of financial statements supported by general ledger software reports

Each attribute was assessed out of a possible 5 point scale, with 5 indicating a strong performance and a 1 indicating a very poor performance of the attribute. Overall, the average for each attribute was in a range of 4.57 to 4.79.

The overall average for the student's grades on the project was 231 points out of a possible 250, resulting in a 92% average.

Evaluation of Quality of the Assessment Tool: The Smithville project corresponds to the students' textbooks chapter by chapter to guide them through the journal entry and financial statement process. The ability to do the entries is available in the textbook and the students must then translate that knowledge into the general ledger package. The Smithville project serves as a strong performance indicator for our learning assessment of software skills due to this transfer of knowledge.

In addition, the criteria used to assess the student's technology skills seem appropriate. The attributes are evaluating the student's ability to organize their work, their ability to modify their work within the GL package, as well as their ability to produce reports from the system and in Excel on their own. I would not recommend changing the assessment criteria for this objective.

Evaluation of Time and Placement of Assessment: This assessment occurred with the final submission of the Smithville Projects at the end of the semester. Smaller milestone submissions occurred throughout the semester, but the complete and final project was evaluated here. I would not recommend changing the timing of the assessment because I believe allowing the students to have time and experience on the general ledger package is beneficial to their understanding of the capabilities and functions of the package.

The Accounting 572i class is for Masters of Accounting students. Many of these students have had prior experience with general ledger packages from outside work experiences, but very few, if any, had experience with governmental accounting. A student's prior experience with any general ledger package was not noticeable on the project. Success on this project was related to the time spent working on the project and the amount of time spent asking questions clarifying any issues that arose.

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results: I feel that the series of Smithville assignments, including the final project, corresponded nicely with the pace and content of the in-class material. Students generally performed very well on the project and most issues that arose were technical issues. Overall, the quality of the submitted projects causes me to be very satisfied with the level of assessment results.

**Department of Accounting
Assurance of Learning Evaluation Form
Fall 2014**

Learning Objective:

Ethics / Social Responsibility - Identifies ethical dilemmas and develops appropriate courses of action that consider the well-being of others and society

Measurement:

ACCT 531 / 531I Case Study - Johnstone and Muzatko (2002).

531 – 16 groups comprised of 49 total students

531I – 4 groups comprised of 10 total students

Responsible:

Paul N. Michas

Description:

The case was one where groups took on the role of either the auditor or client during the final phase of an audit where material misstatement adjustments are negotiated between the client and audit firm. The auditor and client groups were required to negotiate a final amount of misstatements to record in the financial information based on values and information provided in the case. Groups were required to come to some kind of conclusion, but this conclusion was left completely up to the negotiating groups.

Given the nature of client/audit firm negotiations during the completion of an audit, ethical considerations can and often do come into play as the parties are negotiating over the final total dollar amount of misstatements found by the auditor that will be recorded in a company's year-end, audited financial statements. The two parties involved have differing incentives and must consider the effect of their position on company stakeholders, management and the audit firm. The client firm's incentives are commonly to maximize the amount of net income reflected on the financial statements in order to meet the profit expectations of shareholders and company analysts. The auditor's incentives are often to report the most conservative (i.e. lowest) value of net income that complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles so as to minimize the audit firm's exposure to legal liability for possible shareholder stock losses, as well as to maximize the reputation of the audit firm for conducting high-quality audits.

In order to gauge students' grasp of the ethical considerations of the case, a "framework for ethical decision making" was drawn from the class textbook (Johnstone, Gramling and Rittenberg 2014, pp. 132). The framework is as follows:

Step 1 – Identify the ethical issue(s).

Step 2 – Determine the affected parties and identify their rights.

Step 3 – Determine the most important rights.

Step 4 – Develop alternative courses of action.

Step 5 – Determine the likely consequences of each proposed course of action.

Step 6 – Assess the possible consequences, including an estimation of the greatest good for the greatest number. Determine whether the rights framework would cause any course of action to be eliminated.

Step 7 – Decide on the appropriate course of action.

Students were required to assess and describe, in-depth, each step of the framework in the context of their client/audit firm negotiation process and each party's desired effect on the audited financial statements.

Evaluation:

Student groups were evaluated on their completion of the framework on a scaled between one and 10, with one indicating the group did not attempt to complete this part of the assignment at all, and 10 reflecting an extremely thoughtful consideration of all steps in the framework. The graded scores are summarized as follows:

10 – 8 groups
9 – 5 groups
8 – 5 groups
7 – 1 group
6 – 1 group
Below 6 – 0 groups
Mean score – 8.84
Median score – 9.0

Conclusion:

In summary, the vast majority of groups took this part of the case assignment very seriously and thoughtfully considered the ethical issues involved in the negotiation of the completion of an audit engagement. Given the large number of parties that are ultimately affected by the this negotiation (firm shareholders, managers, regulatory agencies, etc. and the audit firm's legal liability and reputational exposure as well as the desire to retain the company as an audit client in the future), the case provides a robust opportunity for students to consider the possible effect of many courses of action on these numerous stakeholders. Further, the case provides a "real world" opportunity to consider the ethical implications of audit engagements, which is a career many of the students plan to go into after graduating from the MAcc program.

References:

Johnstone, K. M., A. A. Gramling, and L. E. Rittenberg. 2014. *Auditing: A Risk-Based Approach to Conducting a High-Quality Audit*. South-Western Cengage Learning; Mason, OH.

Johnstone, K. M., and S. R. Muzatko. 2002. Resolving Difficult Accounting Issues: A Case Study in Client-Auditor Interaction. *Issues in Accounting Education* 17 (1): 27-39

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAM
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
FALL 2014/SPRING 2015**

PROGRAM: Graduate
Assessment Tool: Survey

OBJECTIVE: Overall Outcomes
Administered in: Emailed to students

Description of Assessment and Results: An anonymous assessment survey is sent to all graduating Master of Science in Accounting (MSA) students towards the end of their final semester. The survey asks for the graduate's perspectives on a variety of topics, including the quality of our curriculum, faculty, instructional methods, career development efforts, and advising. After asking these specific questions, we ask for an overall rating of these aspects. The results are listed below.

The spring of 2014 was the first semester we gave a separate assessment survey to the students graduating from the MSA program as it was the first graduating MSA class large enough to anonymously complete the survey. The participation rate for the MSA program this academic year was slightly less than the Master of Accounting (MAcc) program at 64.3% with rates of 82.4% and 36.4% for Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, respectively. This demonstrates a need for the staff to push MSA students to complete the survey through announcements during classes and individual email requests.

We asked students the following questions (all responses on a 1 – 7 scale)

- 1) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the overall quality of your education during the masters program.
- 2) Please indicate your rating of the overall effectiveness of the teaching in the masters program.
- 3) Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the MAcc program regarding your personal development.

Overall Outcomes	<u>S15</u>	<u>F14</u>	<u>S14</u>
a) Overall education	7.00	6.57	5.78
b) Overall effectiveness of teaching	7.00	6.57	5.56
c) Overall personal development	7.00	6.14	5.11

F14/S15 average score for overall education rating: 6.8

Evaluation of Quality of the Assessment Tool: We believe this assessment tool is effective as it was developed based off of the assessment we have been using for many semesters for the MAcc program, which we have continuously updated and improved.

Evaluation of Time and Place of Assessment: The response rate for the assessment survey for Spring 2015 was less than satisfactory. We believe this was a result of the cultural differences with the large number of international students in the MSA program and a need for the staff to be more proactive in soliciting participation. We believe the timing and method of the assessment is adequate.

Satisfaction with the Level of Assessment Results: Overall we are satisfied with the assessment results and the improvement shown from spring 2014. With the low participation rate for spring 2015, we do not anticipate maintaining these perfect scores.