

Institutional Effectiveness

2019-2020

Program: Accounting BS

College and Department: College of Business – Department of Accounting

Contact: Richard Rand

Mission:

- Provide an educational foundation that enables its students to become successful accounting professionals,
- Engage in scholarly activity that makes meaningful contributions to the understanding and practice of accounting and to accounting education, and
- Serve the region, state, community, university, and the profession through outreach activities

We believe teaching, scholarly activities, and service are interdependent and synergistic, and that the spirit of discovery and pursuit of knowledge underlie our educational focus and guide our service activities.

Our Vision: The Department of Accounting will be a recognized leader in undergraduate and graduate accounting education with a focus on technology, and will be the destination of choice for those seeking rich and diverse learning experiences that inspire innovation, leadership, and value creation.

Our Character & Values: The Department of Accounting maintains the highest level of dedication to its academic program, exemplified by a focus on excellence in instruction, commitment to scholarly activity, and engagement in professional and community service by the faculty.

The Department of Accounting is distinguished by...

- A high-touch, personal learning environment fostered by a caring faculty,
- A commitment to experiential learning that produces practical knowledge and professional development in students,
- A strong collegial environment characterized by robust collaboration and high levels of engagement among faculty, staff, and students,
- A technology-driven, interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning that produces team-oriented, competitive, ready-to-work graduates,
- A competent online learning environment distinguished by maintaining the integrity of online testing coupled with the historical strengths in online lectures and extensive examples provided through various online platforms, and
- An organizational culture that encourages ethical and responsible behavior in all stakeholders while embracing the diversity of individuals and ideas.

Program Goals:

- PG 1: The Department will maintain and grow the number of undergraduate students registered as Accounting majors.
- PG 2: Re-organize the Accounting Advisory Board to allow the group to more efficiently and effectively assist the Department of Accounting.
- PG 3: Provide students with opportunities to become more familiar with the extended business community and the opportunities afforded to them locally, nationally, and internationally.
- PG 4: The department will successfully integrate relevant technology skill sets in the undergraduate program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- SLO 1a: Accounting major students will demonstrate overall competency in the business core areas.
- SLO 1b: Students will demonstrate competency in financial accounting.
- SLO 1c: Accounting major students will demonstrate competency on the Bloom's dimensions: Remembering, Understanding, and Application.
- SLO 2: Accounting major students will demonstrate the ability to apply problem-solving skills.
- SLO 3: Accounting students will demonstrate that they are aware of the professional expectations with respect to ethical conduct.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

PG 1: Maintain and grow the number of undergraduate students

- # of Accounting Majors - This metric is provided from Institutional Research data. There was a change in 2019 with respect to how undergraduate students are categorized. Prior to Fall 2019, the # of Accounting majors reported only included Junior and Senior accounting majors who has been formally advised by the Department following their first 60 hours as Basic Business students. Accordingly, there were many Freshmen and Sophomore Basic Business students who maintained the intent to be classified as Accounting Majors, but who were forced to remain classified as Basic Business students. Starting in Fall 2019, incoming Freshmen who intended to be Accounting majors were allowed to be classified as such. As a result, there will be a "jump" in reported numbers beginning in Fall 2019.
- # of Degrees Conferred - This metric is provided from Institutional Research data.
- # of Undergraduate SCH Generated - This metric is tracked internally by the Department and is viewed as measure of efficiency and appropriate deployment of resources.

PG 2: Re-organize the Accounting Advisory Board

- Accounting Advisory Board: Historically, the Accounting Advisory Board at TTU was comprised of anywhere between 25-50 alumni. They attended an annual meeting where they were provided a "State of the Department" report. They had no governance structure and were not asked to participate in direct efforts to assist the Department in their other Program or Student Learning Goals.

In January 2015, the Accounting Advisory Board was re-organized into a smaller, self-governing body with a specific and direct purpose. The group now has its own Constitution and Bylaws. The new AAB will have 12 members, serving rotating 3-year terms. This group will also meet at least twice annually.

PG 3: Opportunities to become more familiar with the extended business community

- Experiential Opportunities: Tracking of student participation in defined high-impact experiences will result in student growth and success.

As part of our effort to improve the undergraduate experience for Accounting majors, we established, in 2011, the International Experience in Accounting. The course is an upper division Accounting elective for Accounting majors only that combines study of international accounting, international business, and a week in London, UK. The International Experience in Accounting serves to broaden students' perspectives of the world in which they live, as well as to prepare them for the international business world.

We will use participation as the primary metric for each of activities "high engagement" activities. There currently is no data for the ART-US component (since it has not yet been offered).

PG 4: Integrate relevant technology skill sets

- Technology: Each Spring term, the Department will distribute a survey to faculty to conduct an inventory of technology topics and skillsets included in their courses at both the undergraduate and Master of Accountancy levels. This survey was initially conducted in Spring 2020.

SLO 1a: Demonstrate overall competency in the business core areas.

- ETS Exam: Assessed by ETS Exit Exam (Major Field Test in Business) taken by graduating seniors in Spring semesters. The results for COB students on the ETS exit exam are analyzed and discussed by the Department faculty.

SLO 1b: Demonstrate competency in financial accounting.

- ACCT 2110 Avg Final Exam Scores: To measure student progress in the first accounting course, we will use the Final Examination scores as a proxy, as well as annual average performance of College of Business students on the Accounting section of the ETS Exam.

SLO 1c: Demonstrate competency on the Bloom's dimensions

- CONNECT Homework Management System: A decision was made by the Department in 2017 to focus on learning as defined by Bloom's Taxonomy. Specifically, the choice was

made to focus on student achievement as defined by Bloom's first three levels of learning (Remembering, Understanding, and Applying) at the undergraduate level. Homework problems and exercises in the CONNECT system are pre-tagged as to the level of Bloom's taxonomy that each item tests. For each chapter in each core course, an assignment is created that includes some Remembering, some Understanding, and some Applying questions. At the end of the semester, a report can be generated to show how students performed on each of those Bloom's dimensions over the course of the term.

The goal was for accounting majors to achieve 75% on the dimensions of Remembering, Understanding and Applying in the core areas of accounting at the undergraduate level (Financial, Cost, Audit, and Tax).

SLO 2: Demonstrate problem-solving skills.

- California Critical Thinking Skills Test: The California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) taken in Fall and Spring semesters by graduating seniors. The CCTST provides a direct measure of the various dimensions of critical thinking.

SLO 3: Demonstrate awareness of the professional expectations

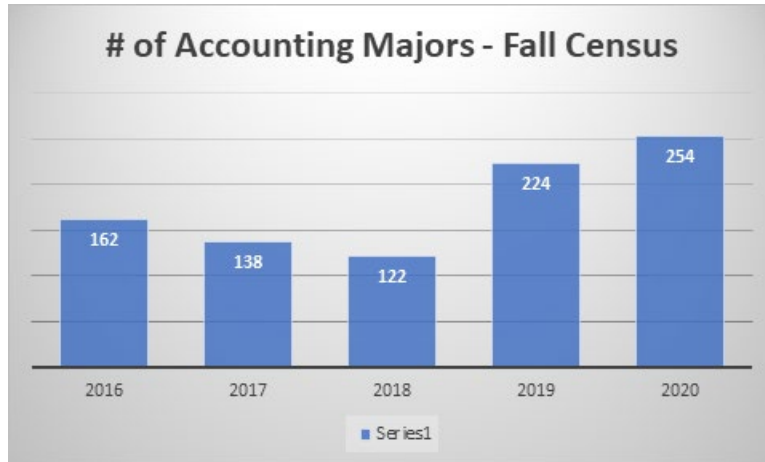
- Ethics: At the undergraduate levels, students' ethical awareness is measured in ACCT 3330 (Federal Taxation) and ACCT 3620 (Auditing). Students are presented with a video on a framework for ethical decision-making. Students are also taught about the online AICPA Code of Professional Conduct and the IRS's Circular 230 ethical requirements for tax preparers. Then embedded course assessments are used to determine the degree to which students have internalized the concepts to which they have been exposed.

Results:

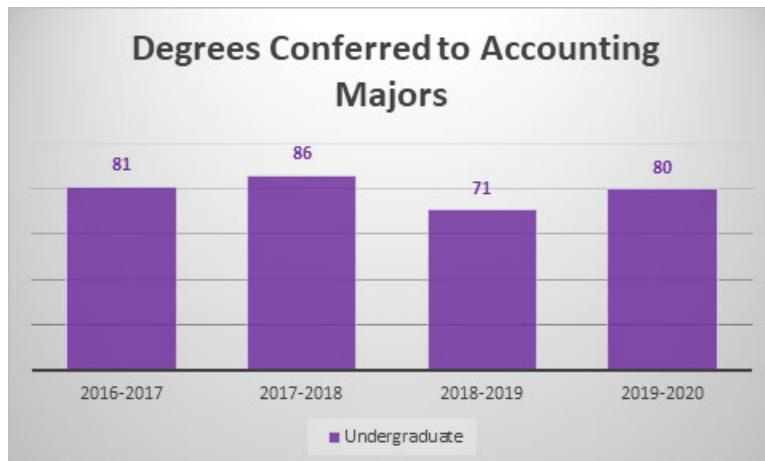
PG 1: Maintain and grow the number of undergraduate students

of Accounting Majors - The Fall Census from 2016 to 2018 showed declining numbers of Accounting majors. This was due to several factors. Primary to this decline was a decline in University enrollment overall. This decline was due to several factors, not the least of which was the Tennessee Promise program combined with an overall strong economy. The State of Tennessee began offering free tuition to students attending the state's two-year colleges. As students completed their work at the lower division, the economy offered many of those students income generating opportunities. The effect of 3.5% unemployment cannot be ignored. An additional confounding factor was the proliferation of "double-majors" in 2016 through 2018. Per University policy, students who chose to double-major during this time period were asked to choose a "primary" major. Only the "primary" major was included in the census numbers, resulting in many Accounting majors not being counted. For example, if a student chose to double-major in Economics and Accounting and chose Economics as their "primary" major, that student would not be counted at all as an Accounting major, even though the student would be taking accounting courses. Beginning in Fall 2019, the designation of double-majors was eliminated at TTU. Going forward, every student who fulfills all the requirements of a program of student will receive a degree for that program of study. As explained earlier, the change in how students are classified changed in Fall 2019. The resulting change allows us to more easily identify and more effectively communicate with students who are interested in Accounting. We believe that the change,

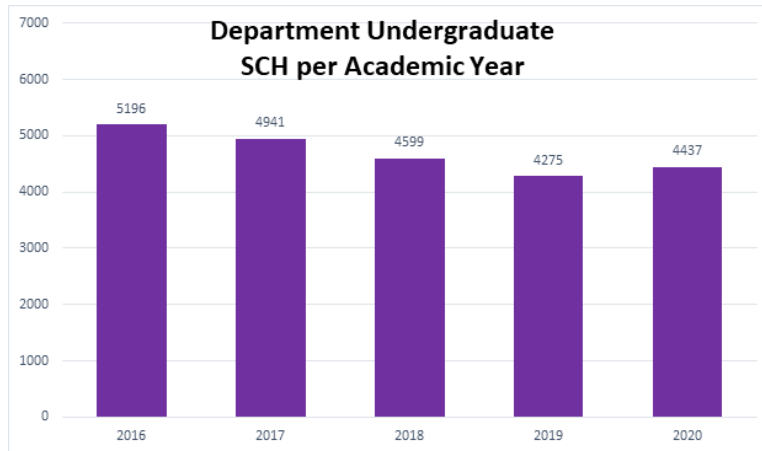
while confounding the interpretation of this particular metric in the short-run, will nonetheless result in better retention of students in the long-run.



of Degrees Conferred – As can be seen from the chart below, while the number of Accounting majors appeared to fall, the number of degrees conferred remained healthy, except for the 2018-2019 academic year, which showed a small decline.



of Undergraduate SCH Generated – As the data indicates, the number of SCH generated at the undergraduate level decreased from 2016-2018, following the pattern indicated by the declining number of Accounting majors. However, the number was up for academic year 2020 and is forecasted to increase again in academic year 2021.



PG 2: Re-organize the Accounting Advisory Board

A working group met in January 2015 to work out the details of a Constitution and Bylaws for a re-organized, self-governing Accounting Advisory Board for TTU. The result was a new framework for an Accounting Advisory Board that will prove useful to the Department.

A group of 12 alumni and stakeholders was selected for the first Accounting Advisory Board. They are organized into three groups with staggered terms. The initial terms were for two years, three years, and four years, respectively. Subsequent Board members have been brought onto the Board to serve three-year terms, with a couple of exceptions to fill terms that were vacated. To date, 27 different individuals have served on the Accounting Advisory Board.

The AAB has met twice per year since its inception in 2015. Outcomes had included:

- Raising \$5,000 to scholarship students for the 2016 London Experience.
- Providing valuable feedback on the development and implementation of the Master of Accountancy Program, launched in Fall 2017.
- Providing ongoing input with respect to the integration of technology with the undergraduate accounting major curriculum and the MACC curriculum.
- Providing valuable input in the development of the Department's Strategic Plan and with respect to AACSB accreditation.

PG 3: Opportunities to become more familiar with the extended business community

A goal of the Department of Accounting is to provide enriching engagement experiences for students and for the students to participate in those activities.

The two highest profiles activities offered by the Department are the International Experience in Accounting (ACCT 4700/5700) and the Accounting Internship opportunity (ACCT 4800). While the International Experience in Accounting was not offered in Spring 2020, there were 20 students scheduled to participate before the course was cancelled due to Covid-19.

The purpose of the International Experience in Accounting is to engage students in non-traditional experiential opportunities. Another objective of the International Experience in Accounting is to help

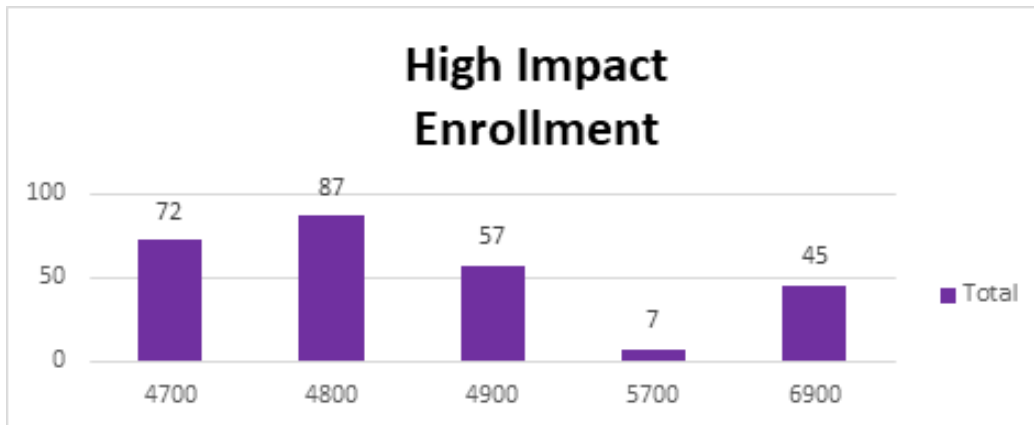
students to overcome natural anxieties about new experiences; specifically, international travel. After preparing in class for 6-8 weeks, the class travels to London during Spring Break, accompanied by a team of faculty. Visits include ICAEW, Enterprise UK/Ireland HQ, Lloyd's of London, Sage, MiniCooper, and at least one CPA firm.

To date, participation in the event each year is as follows:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Undergraduate	12	16	12	15	9	17	17	12
Graduate	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4

To date, 6 different faculty members have participated in the event as both leaders and support faculty.

The Internship opportunity at TTU has been offered for many years and continues to be healthy. The chart below indicates the level of participation in each of our High Impact course activities from 2016-2020.



Due to the impact of Covid-19 beginning in Spring 2020, the use of "high engagement courses" has had to be curtailed. The International Experience was cancelled in Spring 2020 and will also not be offered in Spring 2021. In addition, the ART-US effort was delayed until 2020 due to resource issues, but has been further delayed by Covid-19. The ART-TN efforts have likewise been impacted, but should resume sometime in 2021 or 2022.

PG 4: Integrate relevant technology skill sets

As part of its efforts to modernize the curriculum and keep it relevant, the Department has established the goal of assuring that relevant technologies and skillsets are being integrated into the existing curriculum. Beginning in Spring 2020, the Department will complete an inventory of the relevant skill sets already integrated.

For the undergraduate program, we modified our undergraduate intermediate financial accounting sequence in 2018 to accommodate more space to integrate additional technology skillsets into the course sequence (ACCT 3170, ACCT 3180, and ACCT 3190). We accomplished this by going from a two-course sequence to a three-course sequence. In addition, we challenged professors teaching ACCT 3210, ACCT 3330, and ACCT 3620 to integrate appropriate and relevant technologies into their courses. The results in Spring 2020 were mixed. Indications are that additional technology integration should occur over the following years to increase coverage at the undergraduate level.

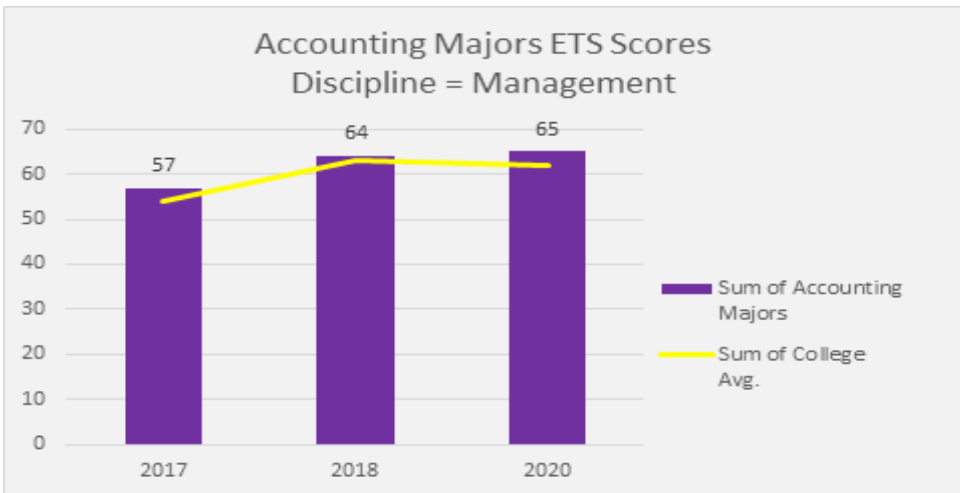
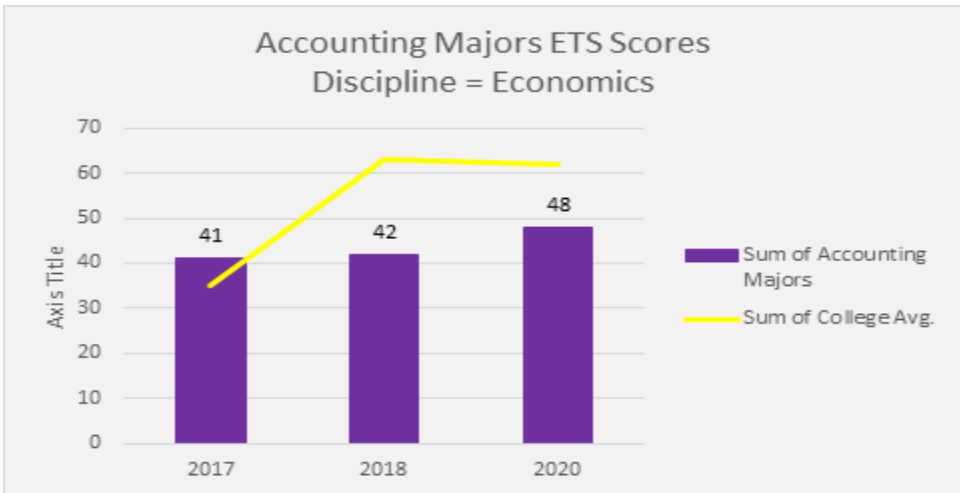
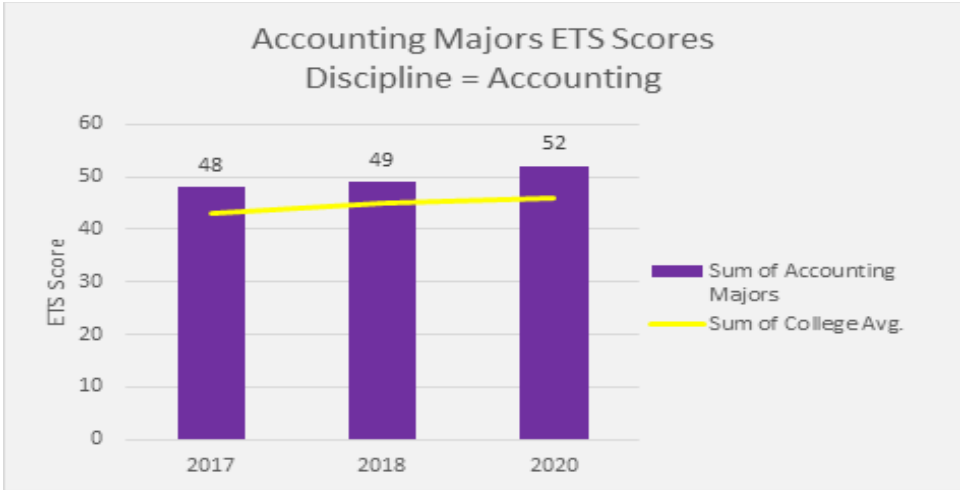
Undergraduate Program Coverage of Technology Skills	Total
Basic Excel Spreadsheet Creation Skills	5
Excel Visualization Skills (making charts and diagrams)	3
Excel Pivot Table Skills	0
Use of Online Auditing Standards	1
Use of Online Tax Resources	1
Use of Online Accounting Standards Codification	1
Use of Online AICPA Code of Professional Conduct	1
Computer-based Preparation of Tax Returns	0
Computer-based Audit Tools	0
Computer-based Audit Workpaper tools	1
Data-base manipulation Skills	0
Visualization Software Skills (such as Tableau or Power BI)	0
Data Encryption	0
Electronic Retention of Data	0
Cybersecurity	0
SOC Reporting	1
Use of online writing assessment tools, such as Grademark or Grammarly.	4
Use of online plagiarism tool TurnItIn.	4

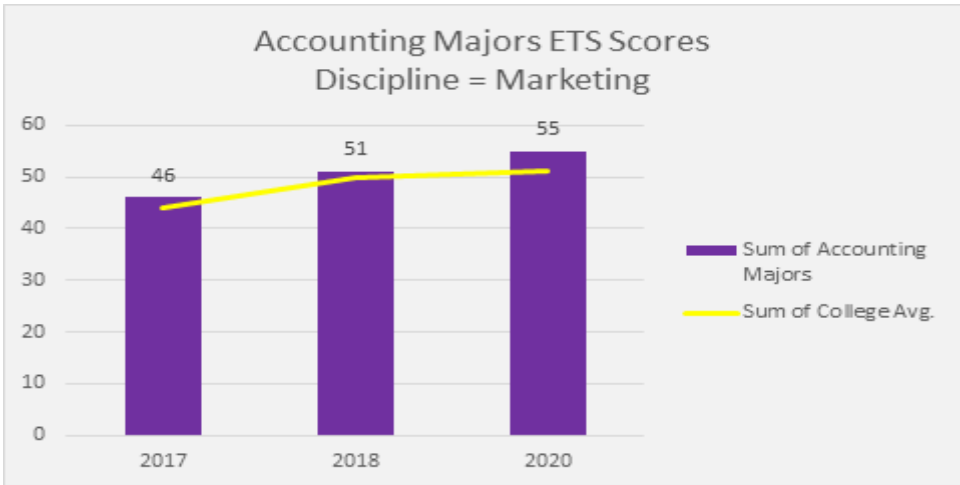
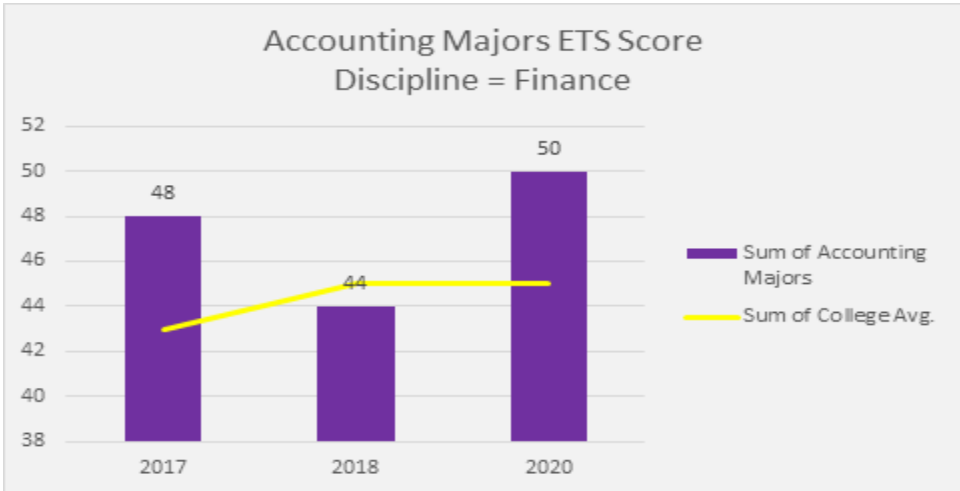
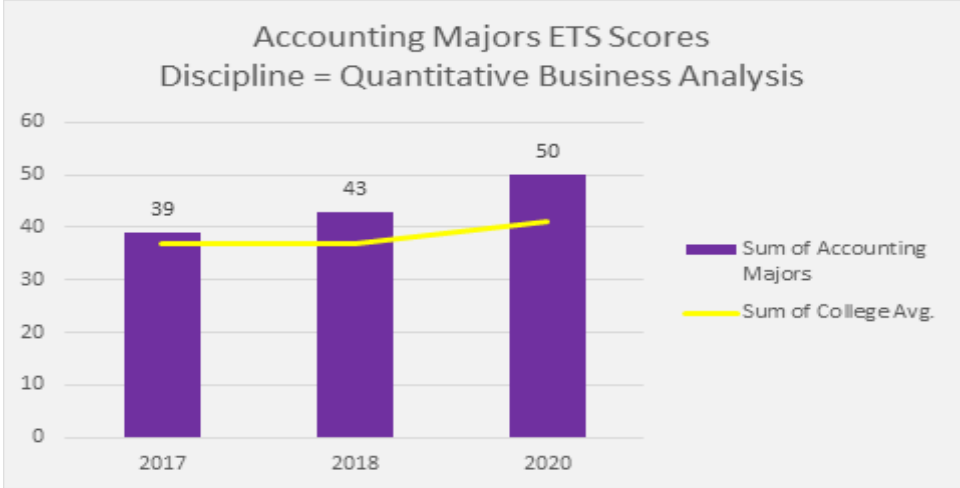
SLO 1a: Demonstrate overall competency in the business core areas.

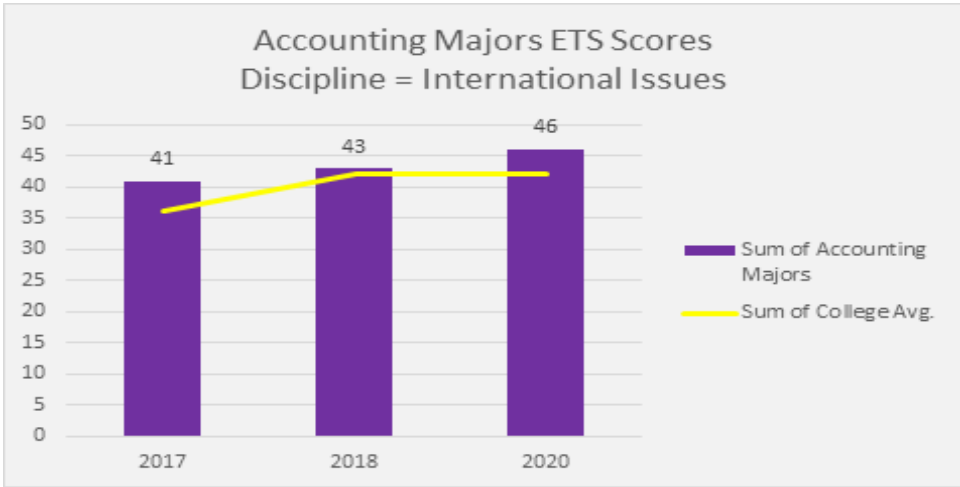
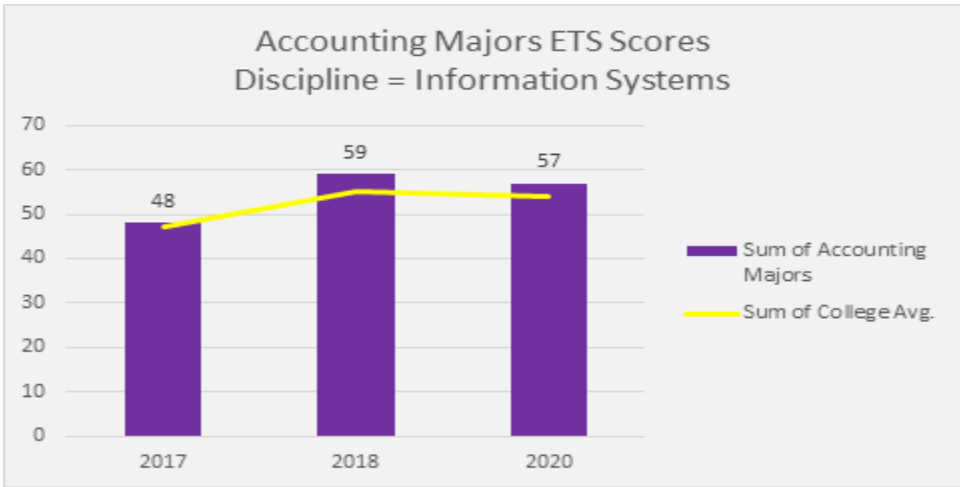
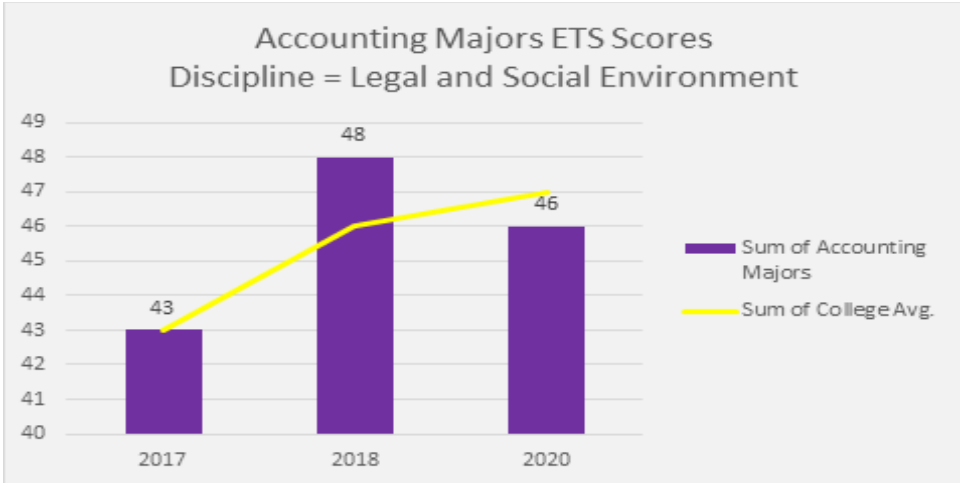
Each term, graduating students are required to take the ETS Exam. The exam provides feedback to the College in several discipline areas and provides the College with information regarding student knowledge acquisition and retention in the key areas of business defined by the curriculum. The disciplines covered by the ETS Exam include:

- Accounting
- Economics
- Management
- Quantitative Business Analysis
- Finance
- Marketing
- Legal and Social Environment
- Information Systems
- International Issues

Data below reports Accounting student performance in these nine areas for Spring 2017, Spring 2018, and Spring 2020. (There is no data available Spring 2019 due to a failure of the University to subscribe to the Major specific data service for Academic Year 2018/2019. This was a result of an administrative error that occurred during the transition to a new Provost who took office in Fall 2018.) Accounting majors showed improvement in almost all disciplines over the periods evaluated. Scores showed a decline in the areas of Legal Environment and Information Systems in Spring 2020. In most years, the scores exceeded the average score for the College in each discipline area. The two areas where the Accounting majors scores did not exceed the average score for the College in Spring 2020 were Economics and Legal & Social Environment.



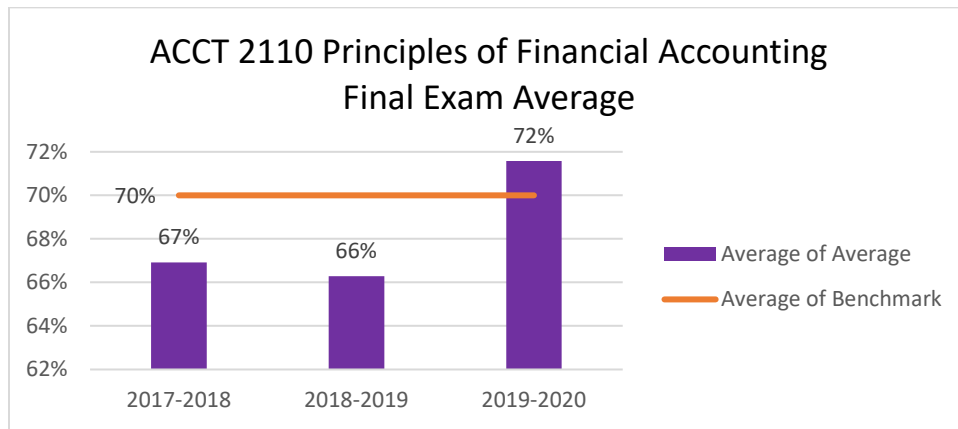




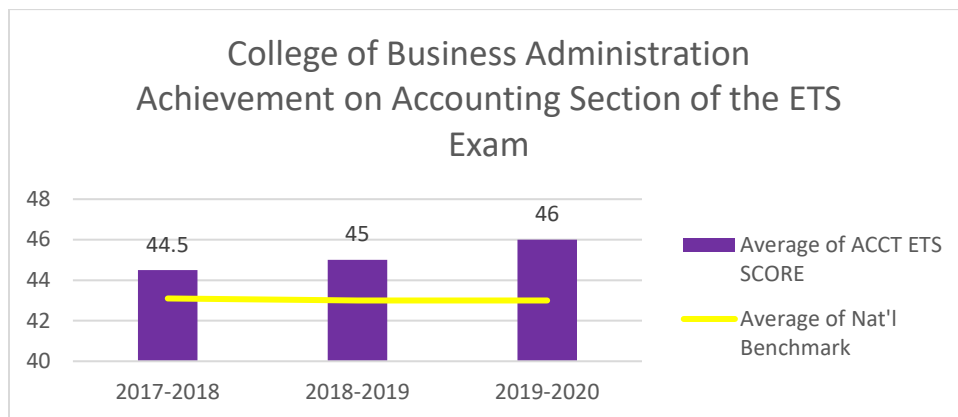
SLO 1b: Demonstrate competency in financial accounting.

The Department teaches ACCT 2110 (Principles of Accounting I) and ACCT 2120 (Principles of Accounting II) in support of all majors in the College of Business. While some non-Business majors enroll in the ACCT 2110/ACCT 2120 sequence, most non-business students choose to take ACCT 3720 (Survey of Accounting). The vast majority of students enrolled in the ACCT 2110/ACCT 2120 sequence are majors in the College of Business. It is the responsibility of the Department to make sure that students learn the basics of Financial Accounting. Accordingly, we use two measures of to determine if the Department is meeting its goal. First, we have a goal of students showing an average performance of 70% on the final examination in ACCT 2110. Second, we have a goal of Business Majors Overall scoring above the national mean on the Accounting section of the ETS Exam.

With respect to the measurement of the average final exam score in ACCT 2110, students fell short of the benchmark in academic years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, but performed above the benchmark in academic year 2019-2020.



With respect to performance on the ETS Exam, College of Business students exceeded the national mean for Accounting in each period measured and showed improvement in each period measured.



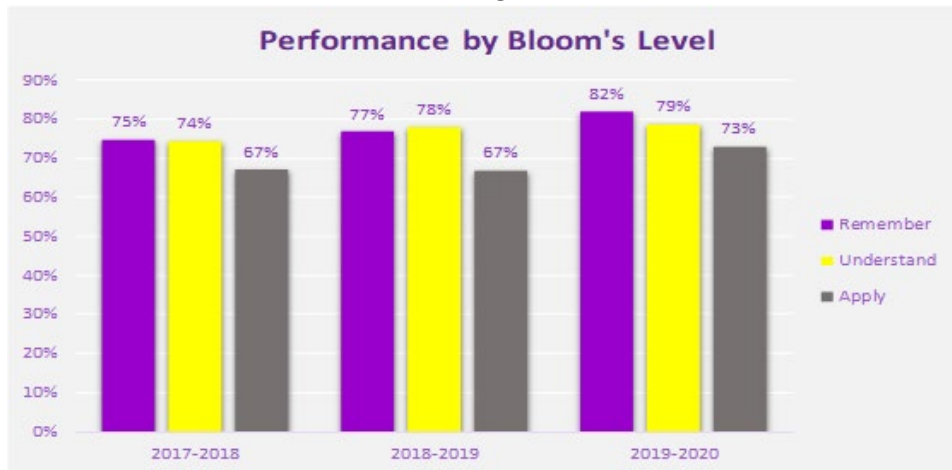
SLO 1c: Demonstrate competency on the Bloom's dimensions

A decision was made by the Department in 2017 to focus on learning as defined by Bloom's Taxonomy. Specifically, the choice was made to focus on student achievement as defined by Bloom's

first three levels of learning (Remembering, Understanding, and Applying) at the undergraduate level, while focusing on Applying, Analyzing, and Evaluation at the graduate level (Master of Accountancy).

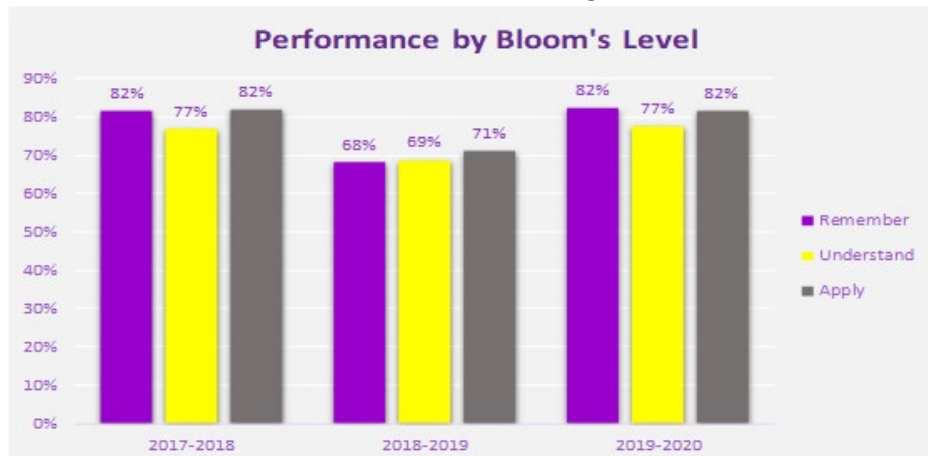
The goal was for accounting majors to achieve 75% on the dimensions of Remembering, Understanding and Applying in the core areas of accounting at the undergraduate level (Financial, Cost, Audit, and Tax). It was anticipated that, while Remembering and Understanding would see the highest levels of achievement, Applying, being a higher order of learning, would see lower performance. The table below indicates that in fact, our expectations were realized. Overall, students achieved our 75% benchmark goal in the dimensions of Remember and Understanding. Students did not achieve our goal in the dimension of Applying in 2018 or 2019, but achieved 73% in 2020. All three dimensions saw improvement each year over the previous year.

Accounting Overall

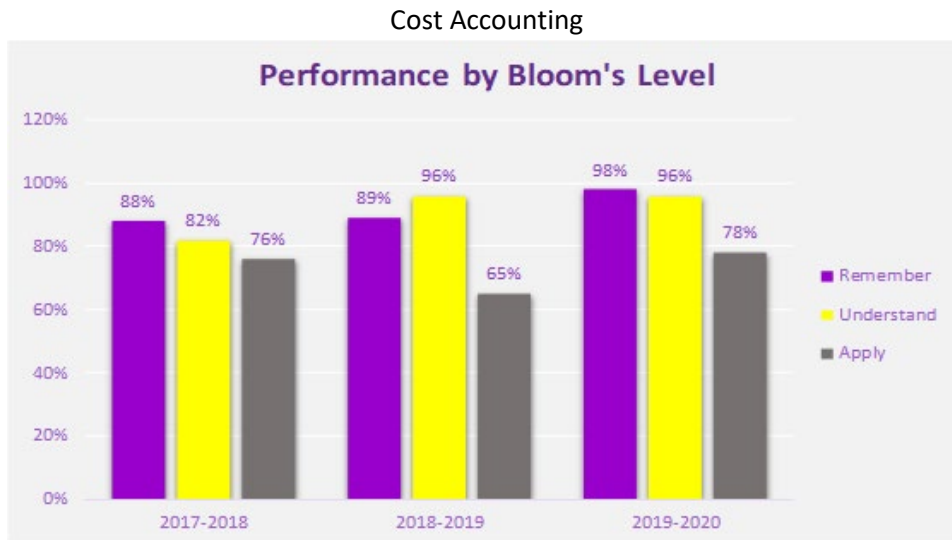


In the four core areas that we examined, results were “mixed”, but generally are trending in a positive direction. In Financial Accounting, on the dimension of Remembering, students exceeded the 75% benchmark in 2018 and 2020, but not in 2019. Students showed similar performance in the dimension of Understanding. The students appeared to do much better in the dimension of Applying. Across the board, there was a significant decline in performance in the 2018/2019 academic year. The Department faculty has met and has not determined an explanation for the drop in 2019.

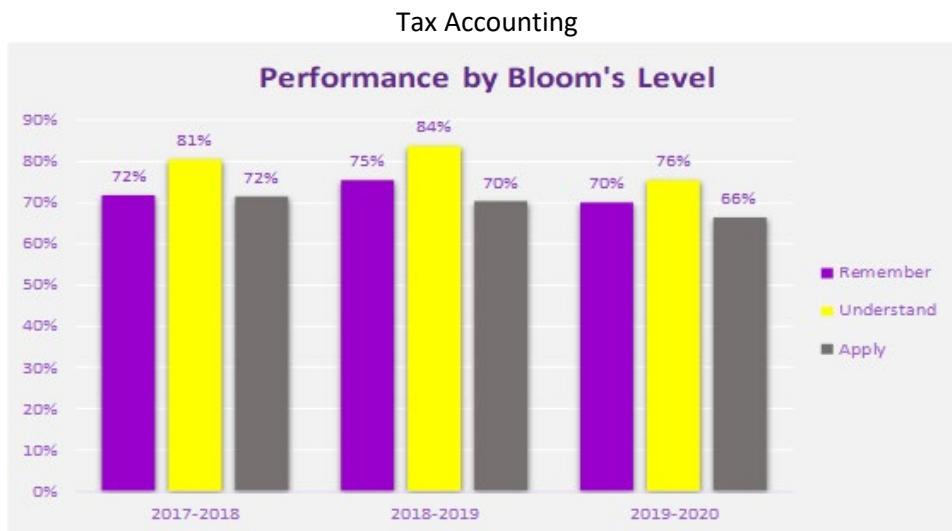
Financial Accounting



In the core area of Cost Accounting, students far exceeded expectations across the board. As expected, the performance on the dimension of Applying was lower than expected, with 2019 performance falling below the benchmark. Overall, the Department felt that the goal was achieved.

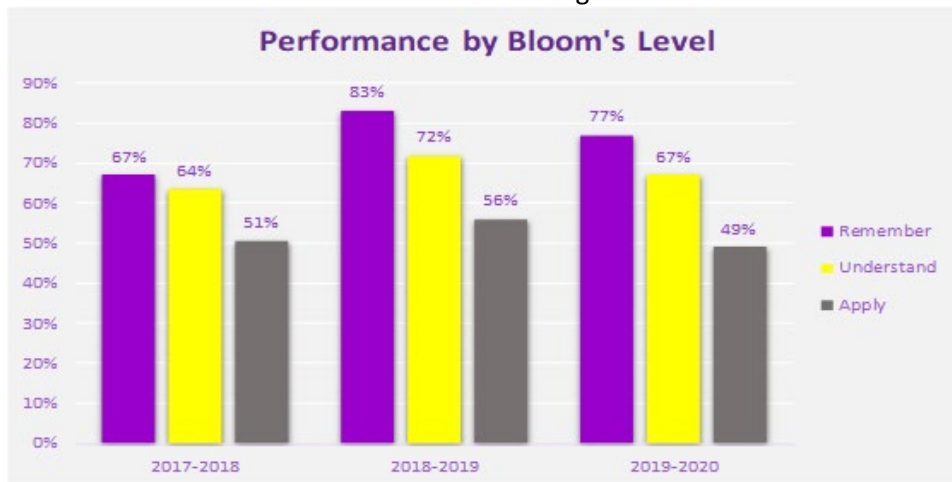


In the core area of Tax, students performed consistently well on the dimension of Understanding. The dimensions of Remembering and Applying fell short of the benchmark, but performance, overall seems acceptable.



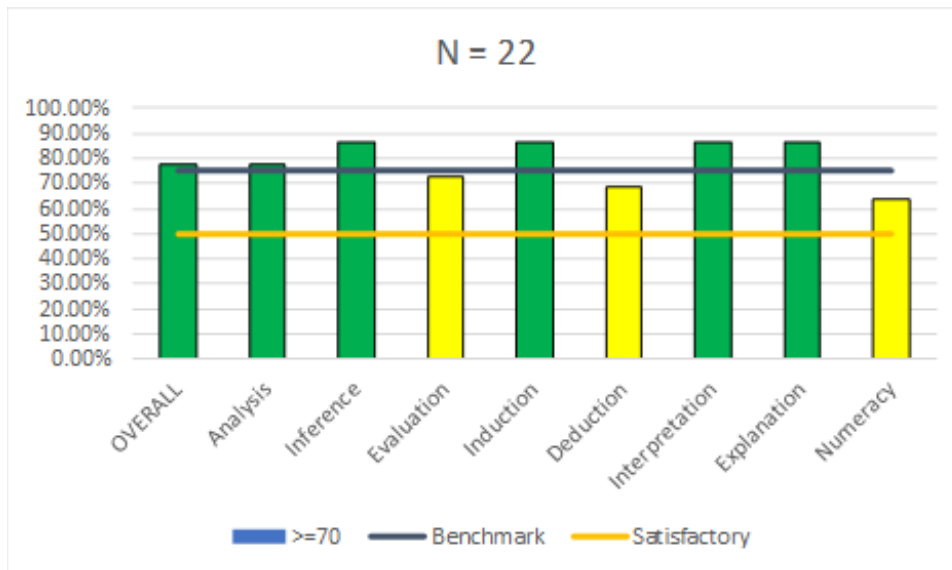
In the core area of Audit, the benchmark was achieved only in 2019 and 2020 for Remembering. In all other years and for the dimensions of Understanding and Applying, students fell short of the benchmark.

Audit Accounting



SLO 2: Demonstrate problem-solving skills.

The College of Business assesses Critical Thinking using the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), which is administered as an exit exam to all graduation business students. We are able to pull out the results just for Accounting students. As seen in the chart below, Accounting majors are performing at or above the National benchmark in all but three categories; Evaluation, Deduction, and Numeracy. Evaluation is close enough to the benchmark, that it does not present concern to us. However, Deduction and Numeracy are both lower than we would prefer.



SLO 3: Demonstrate awareness of the professional expectations

The Department of Accounting offers a curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels that includes expectations related to performance as a professional accountant. Accordingly, we focus on ethical issues of importance to professional accountants. At the undergraduate level, ethics is taught across the curriculum. We specifically measure ethical awareness in ACCT 3330 (Federal Taxation) and ACCT 3620 (Auditing). Both courses are usually taken in the senior year.

The Department of Accounting measures awareness of professional ethics using embedded measures in ACCT 3330 and ACCT 3620. (Awaiting Data at this time)

Modifications for Improvement:

PG 3: Opportunities to become more familiar with the extended business community

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our ability to continue to sponsor meaningful, in-person experiential opportunities for our students. For example, the International Experience in Accounting was cancelled in Spring 2020, will be cancelled for Spring 2021, and will likely have to be cancelled for Spring 2022. In addition, the nature of internship experiences has also changed considerably. While many students are getting internships, they are more often-than-not in the form of virtual work-from-home experiences, devoid of the opportunity to experience the lessons of an in-person face-to-face work culture.

In 2021, we will strive to develop experiential opportunities that are domestically based to substitute for the international experience that we will have to put on hold. In addition, we will strive to develop and engage students in more virtual experiences.

SLO 1a: Demonstrate overall competency in the business core areas.

While Accounting students appear to be performing well in most areas, there is an obvious disconnect with respect to the area of Economics. The first step will be to have a meeting with the Chair of the Department of Economics, Finance, and Marketing to discuss differences in how and what we are teaching our students. We will review the kinds of things that are asked on the ETS exam to seek out reasons why accounting majors seem to perform relatively poorly on economics questions.

SLO 2: Demonstrate problem-solving skills.

The results of critical thinking measures would appear to indicate that, overall, accounting majors are performing well in the areas of critical thinking that are being measured. At the undergraduate level, the dimensions of evaluation, deduction, and numeracy are slightly below the target benchmark. The move to integrate additional analytics and visualization skills throughout the curriculum (see Program Goal 4) should contribute to an improvement in critical thinking skillsets overall and particularly in the areas of deduction and numeracy.

Appendices

1. Accounting BSBA Curriculum Map

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

COURSE	SLO 1a*	SLO 1b	SLO 1c	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4
ACCT 2110		X				
ACCT 2120		X				
ACCT 3170	N/A		X	X		
ACCT 3180	N/A		X	X		
ACCT 3190	N/A		X	X		
ACCT 3210	N/A		X	X	X	X
ACCT 3330	N/A		X	X	X	X
ACCT 3620	N/A		X		X	X

Note: SLO 1a relates to topics covered in core Business courses outside Accounting.