Stevens Institute of Technology

School of Business

**AACSB**  
**ASSURANCE OF LEARNING**

**Master of Science in Financial Engineering**

**(FE)**

**LEARNING GOAL # 1**

**Students can communicate effectively in written and oral communications.**

**Responsibility: Zhenyu Cui, & Andrew Stein**

May 2019

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# 1. INTRODUCTION: LEARNING GOAL #1

**Goal: Students can communicate effectively in writing and oral presentations.**

*Objective 1: Students will be able to write effectively.*

*Objective 2: Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

A major educational objective of the School of Business education is to ensure that all of our graduates have effective written and oral communications skills.

While many of our students have strong communications skills, other students, especially foreign students, need special training in this area. In the past, all academic programs and individual instructors have made an effort to assess and improve the communications skills of their students. An advantage of the AACSB assessment process is that it helps us take a more organized and uniform approach to achieving this crucial educational objective.

The communications learning goal as described in this report is the same for all undergraduate and graduate programs in the School of Business and is assessed using the same learning objectives, traits and rubrics as described in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.

In spring 2009, the School of Business (at the time named the Howe School) developed a new web-based Writing Resource Center at <http://howe.stevens.edu/academics/aacsb-information/writing-resource-center/>.

This website is intended for use by:

1. Instructors wishing to help students improve their written and oral skills.
2. Students seeking information on Howe School communication skill requirements and the resources that are available at Stevens to help them meet these requirements.
3. Students seeking guidance on issues ranging from basic grammatical skills to the required format of master and PhD theses.

# 2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND TRAITS

The following table outlines the specific learning objectives and corresponding traits for the Howe School’s written and oral communications skill assessment:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective 1:** *Students will be able to write effectively.* | |
| **Traits** |  |
| Trait 1: | Logical Flow |
| Trait 2: | Grammar & Sentence Structure |
| Trait 3: | Spelling & Word Choice |
| Trait 4: | Development of Ideas |
| **Objective 2:** *Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* | |
| **Traits** |  |
| Trait 1: | Organization & Logic |
| Trait 2: | Voice Quality |
| Trait 3: | Physical Presence |
| Trait 4: | Use of Slides to Enhance Communication |
| Trait 5: | Transitions/Time Management/Q&A |

# 3. RUBRICS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Writing Rubric**  *Goal: Students will be able to communicate effectively in writing.* | | | | |
| **Trait** | **Poor (0)** | **Good (5)** | **Excellent (10)** | **Score** |
| **Trait 1:**  **Logical Flow** | Unclear introduction or conclusion. Does not use a sequence of material to lead reader through the paper. Draws illogical conclusions | Develops ideas through effective use of paragraphs, transitions, opening and concluding statements. Generally well structured to suggest connection between sub-topics. | Maintains clear focus, uses structure to build the paper's conclusions. Presents analysis using sequence of ideas, clarity of flow and continuous voice or point of view. |  |
| **Trait 2:**  **Grammar & Sentence Structure** | Frequently uses inappropriate grammar and incomplete or poorly structured sentences which interfere with comprehension. | Generally complies with standard English grammar and sentence usage. | Sophisticated use of English language, using varied sentence structured, phrasing and cadence. Grammar is error-free |  |
| **Trait 3:**  **Spelling & Word Choice** | Frequent misspellings. Poor or limited choice of words for expression of ideas. | Has proofread or checked spelling, and uses vocabulary correctly. Minor errors. | Demonstrates good use of words to support written expression of topic. Spelling is error-free. |  |
| **Trait 4:**  **Development of Ideas** | Many unsupported statements offered. Uses flawed or unclear reasoning. | Most statements supported, ideas explained with examples and written with sufficient explanation. | Shows thoughtful reasoning and explores alternatives. Uses existing, supported ideas to develop well-formed, readable output. |  |
| **Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19; Meets: 20-29; Exceeds: 30-40 Total Score:** | | | |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Presentation Rubric**  *Goal: Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* | | | | |
| **Trait** | **Poor (0)** | **Good (5)** | **Excellent (10)** | **Score** |
| **Trait 1:**  **Organization & Logic** | Fails to introduce topic; no evidence of or poor logical flow of topic. | Prepares listeners for sequence and flow of topic. Loses place occasionally but flow and structure are still clear. | Engages listeners with overview, guides listeners through connections between sections, and alerts audience to key details and concepts. |  |
| **Trait 2:** **Voice Quality** | Cannot be heard or understood well due to volume, mumbling, speed, monotone delivery, and/or heavily accented English. | Clear delivery with well-modulated voice. Displays some confidence and enthusiasm, but may also contain flatter periods or sound overly rehearsed. | Exemplary delivery, with a voice that sounds fully engaged, conveys enthusiasm and confidence, and relates to the audience well. |  |
| **Trait 3:** **Physical Presence** | Turns away from audience or uses distracting gestures, such as pacing or tugging clothing. Speaker seems stiff, awkward or uncomfortable. Little eye contact. | Speaker is relaxed in front of the room and keeps distracting movements and gestures to a minimum. Generally faces audience and makes eye contact. | Speaker’s body language is superb and fully engages the room. Strong, consistent eye contact to the entire audience. Uses confident gestures to underscore key verbal points. |  |
| **Trait 4:** **Use of Slides to Enhance Communications** | Misspelled, too busy, too much text, too many slides for allotted time, and/or poor use of graphics like charts. | Slides are readable, containing a reasonable amount of material per slide. Good use of graphics or illustrations. | Slides are well written/designed, engaging to the audience, and used as support to verbal content presentation. |  |
| **Trait 5:** **Transitions** **Time Management** **Q&A** | Transitions are awkward or non-existent. Speakers go over time limits. Answers are disorganized or non-responsive. | Transitions are smooth. Speakers generally stay within time limits. Speakers respond to questions well and provide sufficient response. | Transitions are professional and very smooth. Speakers respond convincingly and address all aspects of question. |  |
| **Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19; Meets: 20-35; Exceeds: 36-50 Total Score:** | | | |  |

# 4. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Where & when measured?** | **How measured?** | **Criterion** |
| Students are assessed in the fall and spring semesters in the required course: *FE 800 Project in Financial Engineering.* | Student presentations are video-taped, and student essays are assessed for writing skills. Feedback is provided to each individual student.  Sampling: Rubrics are completed for a sample of 30 students in each semester. |  |

The FE program assesses the communication learning skills of all students in *FE 800 Project in Financial Engineering*. The instructor in the selected class collects a written report from students as part of the normal coursework. These writing samples are holistically graded by staff in the Howe School’s Business Communications Center. Feedback to students consists of a grade (*0 to 10; 0-3 = Does Not Meet Expectations; 4-7 = Meets Expectations; 8-10 = Exceeds Expectations*) plus a short description of the meaning of each score (see Appendix B). The instructor managing the learning goal receives a list of the students and their scores – which is used for AACSB reporting purposes.

# 5. RESULTS OF LEARNING GOAL ASSESSMENT – INTRODUCTION

The results of the initial learning goal assessments carried out to date are included below.

**Explanation**

Each learning goal has a number of learning objectives, and performance on each objective is measured using a rubric that, in turn, contains a number of desired “traits.” Students are scored individually on each trait.

The grading sheets for each student are used to develop a Summary Results Sheet for each learning goal objective. A selection of these summaries is included below.

The first table in the Summary Results Sheet for a learning objective/trait gives the counts of students falling in each of the three categories:

* Does Not Meet Expectations
* Meets Expectations
* Exceeds Expectations

The right-hand column in the table is used to record the average score of the students on each trait. This table provides an indication of the relative performance of students on each trait.

The second table on each sheet provides the counts of students who fall in each of the above three categories for the overall learning objective.

The person doing the assessment provides explanatory comments and recommendations on the bottom of the Results Summary Sheet. The recommendations improve content or pedagogy changes for the next time the course is given.

# 6. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2018

**LEARNING GOAL #1:**   
*Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:**   
*Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**   
*May 10, 2018*

**ASSESSOR:**   
*Kephart, Minsloff*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:**  
*90 Students – FE 800*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **7** | **26** | **57** | **7.7** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **16** | **66** | **8** | **4.8** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **13** | **55** | **22** | **5.5** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **8** | **44** | **38** | **6.6** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **6.2** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **17** | **49** | **24** |

**COMMENTS:**

*The majority of students in this program continue to meet or exceed expectations in their writing. The documents are generally clearly developed and writers continue to use supporting evidence effectively in creating their arguments. As many of these students are non-native English speakers, word- and sentence-level issues continue to be the largest source of problems. Grammar errors and overall inconsistencies in writing style and are also present, and reflect a deficiency in the ability to proofread and recognize certain repeated writing issues.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Writers are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from the Writing & Communication Center on campus to refine and improve their proofreading abilities. Recognizing common errors is the first (and most crucial) step to addressing them. Allowing students extra class time to submit their documents for peer review would also be helpful. Wherever possible, instructors should give out samples of documents (both academic and professional) to model professional-level writing for all students.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:**   
*Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**   
*Apr 26 2018 and May 3, 2018*

**ASSESSOR:**   
*Billy Middleton*

*Andrew Stein*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:**   
*96 Students – FE 800*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **27** | **69** | **7.7** |
| 2: Voice & Body Language | **1** | **51** | **44** | **6.2** |
| 3: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **1** | **60** | **19** | **5.4** |
| 4: Ability to Answer Questions | **0** | **59** | **37** | **6.3** |
| 5: Content | **0** | **44** | **49** | **6.6** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **6.5** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **1** | **85** | **10** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Most of the students met or exceeded expectations for presenting this semester. The strongest areas continue to be Organization and Logic. This is likely due to the fact that they are given examples of successful pitches in class and model their own pitches on them. Traits 2, 3 and 4 continue to vary (sometimes wildly) from group to group. Different levels of speaking comfort and experience led to wide variations in #2. All students should take every opportunity to speak publicly in order to get more comfortable with the process. Poor and inconsistent eye contact continues to be a problem. In slide creation, the biggest issues were small text size and slides cramped with tables and other data. These are due, at least in part, to students mimicking sample presentations, and so it is recommended that instructors be more aware of pointing out these problems when giving out samples in class.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*As mentioned above, faculty should be aware of the pros and cons of giving out presentation examples to students. They tend to copy what they see, both the good and the bad. Faculty can also make an explicit distinction between what they require in an academic presentation, and the different expectations that may come into play when preparing a presentation for external stakeholders.*

# 7. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2018

**LEARNING GOAL #1:**   
*Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:**   
*Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**   
*Dec 2018*

**ASSESSOR:**   
*Hardin, Kephart, Minsloff, Mendez-Booth*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:**  
*37 Students – MGT 609, BIA 650, EMT 635, MGT 635, FE 800*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **13** | **24** | **8.0** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **2** | **26** | **9** | **6.0** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **3** | **20** | **14** | **6.5** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **1** | **16** | **20** | **7.2** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **6.9** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **4** | **19** | **14** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students overall continue to perform better in the technical/sentence-level aspects of writing. Sentences are generally clear and word choice is appropriate for the type of document. Scores tended to be slightly lower in the areas of developing cohesive arguments and supporting points with specific details and facts. Some of this is attributed to the types of documents we assess, which often rely more on recounting information than developing new ideas. However, some of this may be caused by the students not fully grasping the distinction between stating an opinion and supporting an argument.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Given the comments above, it is recommended that faculty read student work with a specific eye toward developing arguments and providing support. Point out were students are presenting their interpretation of data as facts, or when they are making arguments without providing supporting data. This may require rethinking the writing assignments within class, or possibly creating new assignments which can highlight these issues and force students to develop these skills.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:**   
*Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**   
*December 2018*

**ASSESSOR:**   
*Middleton, Whitney, Pelphrey, Balog, Stein*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:**   
*41 Students – BIA 650, MGT 609, FE 800*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **15** | **26** | **8.2** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **25** | **16** | **7.1** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **1** | **24** | **8** | **6.0** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **37** | **4** | **6.3** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **26** | **15** | **7.4** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **7.0** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **25** | **16** |

**COMMENTS:**

*The large majority of students across all of these groups continue to perform at or above expectations in delivering oral presentations. While there is clear variation of style and comfort levels, as well as challenges presented by English Language Learners, almost everyone presents in a professional way. The biggest challenge to the students seems to be breaking out of the restrictive Powerpoint style and finding a way to present their information in a unique, interesting and compelling way. Judging by the general similarity of slide layouts across groups, it can be assumed that most groups are mirroring samples provided by the instructor. What is necessary to pass a course, may not work in all professional environments. Also, since some groups are now presenting remotely it is impossible to assess their physical presence. And there are so many groups presenting that Q&A (a critical component in a “real” presentation( is often abandoned due to time demands.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*It is recommended that faculty focus more attention on the visual representation of class data and include this as a component of the final project grade. Faculty can also provide additional opportunities for oral presentation during the semester (even if these are done in smaller groups) and to encourage peer feedback. Allowing time for a brief Q&A after each presentation would also be greatly beneficial.*

# 8. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2019

**LEARNING GOAL #1:**   
*Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:**   
*Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**   
*May 2019*

**ASSESSOR:**   
*Kephart, Pelphrey*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:**  
*53 Students – FE 800*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | 3 | 19 | 31 | 7.1 |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | 4 | 33 | 16 | 6.1 |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | 4 | 23 | 26 | 6.6 |
| 4: Development of ideas | 3 | 27 | 23 | 6.6 |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | 6.6 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | 5 | 26 | 22 |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students this spring continue the trend of struggling (at times) with developing and supporting arguments. Students often try to overwhelm with data and detail, rather than crafting compelling support. Sentence-level aspects seem to at a higher level, which is attributable to many factors, but some is likely due to the increase in resources (live and online) which can point out errors in word usage and grammar and suggest fixes. Even with these challenges, a majority of students continue to perform at or above expectations.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*The two primary recommendations are to craft assignments that require students to produce and support compelling arguments, and to encourage them to use in-person resources (Writing & Communications Center) and online resources to continue to hone their craft and improve their writing.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:**   
*Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**   
*May 2019*

**ASSESSOR:**   
*Balog*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:**   
*57 Students – FE 800*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | 0 | 1 | 56 | 9.7 |
| 2: Voice Quality | 0 | 24 | 33 | 7.5 |
| 3: Physical Presence | 1 | 27 | 29 | 6.9 |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | 0 | 44 | 13 | 6.7 |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | 0 | 2 | 55 | 9.6 |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | 8.1 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | 0 | 8 | 49 |

**COMMENTS:**

*Oral presentations continue to be generally strong in this group, with overall development of content being clear and compelling. Students are generally professional in their demeanor, aware of working within time constraints, and display strong verbal abilities. The areas that need work across many of the students is maintianing eye contact and engagement with the audience, using small (and in some cases unreadable) text on slides and charts, and often weak or absent transitions betweek speakers.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Faculty should encourage students to practice in class (perhaps setting aside time for trial runs) to make sure they engage the audience. It would also be preferred to ask the audience to close their laptops and focus on the speakers to encourage them to reciprocate. Beyond that, faculty could create a style guide (with font size minimums, for example) to help the students adhere to best practices.*

# 9. OUTCOMES: FE LEARNING GOAL # 1 AFTER 1 ROUND OF ASSESSMENT

The following table shows the average scores on each goal objective.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Objective 1  Written Communication | Objective 2  Oral Communication |
| Spring 2018 | 6.2 | 6.5 |
| Fall 2018 | 6.9 | 7.0 |
| Spring 2019 | 6.6 | 8.1 |

# 10. CLOSE LOOP PROCESS – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT RECORD

Assurance of Learning

Assessment/Outcome Analysis

Close Loop Process - Continuous Improvement Record

**Program:** Master of Science in Financial Engineering

**Goal 1:** Students can communicate effectively in written and oral communications.

**Goal Owner:** Khaldoun Khashanah, Zhenyu Cui, & Andrew Stein

**Where Measured:** Students are assessed in the fall and spring semesters in the required course:

**FE800** Project in Financial Engineering.

**How Measured:** Student presentations are video-taped, and student essays are assessed for writing skills. Feedback is provided to each individual student.

Sampling:

**Closing the Loop: Actions taken on specific objectives**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Objective 1** | | *Students will be able to write effectively.* |  |
| **When Assessed:** | | *Spring 2019* | | |
| **Remedial**  **Action** | | *The two primary recommendations are to craft assignments that require students to produce and support compelling arguments, and to encourage them to use in-person resources (Writing & Communications Center) and online resources to continue to hone their craft and improve their writing.* | | |
| **Outcome from previous assessment** | | *From the comparison of the performances of the students for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, it is clear that the number of students that exceed expectations has dropped. This may be due to the fact that many students just present mathematical formulae instead of formulating compelling arguments that are easy to understand. In future course offering, as instructors, we shall explicitly instruct the students to minimize the use of mathematical formula and technical jargons in their writing, while asking them to write arguments supporting the motivation behind their research project.* | | |
|  | **When Assessed:** | | *Fall 2018* |  |
|  | **Remedial**  **Action** | | *Given the comments above, it is recommended that faculty read student work with a specific eye toward developing arguments and providing support. Point out were students are presenting their interpretation of data as facts, or when they are making arguments without providing supporting data. This may require rethinking the writing assignments within class, or possibly creating new assignments which can highlight these issues and force students to develop these skills.* |  |
|  | **Outcome from previous assessment** | | *The written scores have improved from the results in the previous semester. In Fall 2018, we have asked students to read some model academic writing samples, and we also discuss how to carry out proper academic writing in the second lecture of the semester. In addition, we provide additional time for the students to prepare their writing documents. We think these actions helped, and we shall continue with them in future semesters.* |  |
|  | **When Assessed:** | | *Spring 2018* |  |
|  | **Remedial**  **Action** | | *Writers are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from the Writing & Communication Center on campus to refine and improve their proofreading abilities. Recognizing common errors is the first (and most crucial) step to addressing them. Allowing students extra class time to submit their documents for peer review would also be helpful. Wherever possible, instructors should give out samples of documents (both academic and professional) to model professional-level writing for all students.* |  |
|  | **Objective 2** | | *Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* |  |
|  | **When Assessed:** | | *Spring 2019* |  |
|  | **Remedial**  **Action** | | *Faculty should encourage students to practice in class (perhaps setting aside time for trial runs) to make sure they engage the audience. It would also be preferred to ask the audience to close their laptops and focus on the speakers to encourage them to reciprocate. Beyond that, faculty could create a style guide (with font size minimums, for example) to help the students adhere to best practices.* |  |
|  | **Outcome from previous assessment** | | *From the summary results, as compared to Fall 2018, the students have improved significantly on average in their oral presentation skills. In future course offering, we shall ask students to practice more and also encourage the audience to be attentive to the speaker and also ask constructive questions.* |  |
|  | **When Assessed:** | | *Fall 2018* |  |
|  | **Remedial**  **Action** | | *It is recommended that faculty focus more attention on the visual representation of class data and include this as a component of the final project grade. Faculty can also provide additional opportunities for oral presentation during the semester (even if these are done in smaller groups) and to encourage peer feedback. Allowing time for a brief Q&A after each presentation would also be greatly beneficial.* |  |
|  | **Outcome from previous assessment** | | *The oral presentation scores improve from the previous semester. We think the advice for being cautious in providing presentation examples is very helpful. We have emphasized in class that the students have to create their own presentation style rather than following existing styles. However, we still ask them to follow some rules to not to put too many words, or complete sentences on the slide. We also emphasized the importance of making eye contacts with audiences during their presentation, and we think the students pay special attention to this. We shall keep these advices for future semesters, and may furthermore suggest that the students practice more before giving out the final presentation.* |  |
|  | **When Assessed:** | | *Spring 2018* |  |
|  | **Remedial**  **Action** | | *As mentioned above, faculty should be aware of the pros and cons of giving out presentation examples to students. They tend to copy what they see, both the good and the bad. Faculty can also make an explicit distinction between what they require in an academic presentation, and the different expectations that may come into play when preparing a presentation for external stakeholders.* |  |

# APPENDIX A: CURRENT PROCESS

The current assessment and review process for the School of Business and Assessment Program (*FE 800*) is as follows:

1. Essay submissions are requested from participating students. These requests are either sent via course instructors, or via an online submission form (Canvas). Essays are designated as 3- or 4-page papers that utilize paragraph and sentence structure.
2. Essays are collected by the *FE 800* Course Coordinator (Andrew Stein). Essay collection can occur either through hard-copy format (i.e., course instructors collect a stack of essay and hand them to the Course Coordinator) or through soft-copy (i.e., students submit essays electronically through Canvas, and subsequently to TurnItIn.com – an originality verification service).
3. Essays are then delegated to designated assessors, who have undergone a standardizing and normative process in order to make sure that assessment scores and feedback is consistent across assessors.
4. Assessors review each essay, either in hard-copy or soft-copy, and (1) make grammatical corrections, (2) indicate successful strategies, (3) comment on areas to improve or focus on, and (4) offer suggestions for style, flow and organization. This process is designed to take roughly 20 minutes per essay.
   1. Note: This new assessment process, which provides each student written feedback on his/her essay, is intended to help the student during review. Since the comments and corrections included in each assessed essay are designed to be constructive and forward-looking, it is our hope that this feedback helps the student focus on (1) the successful areas of each essay, and (2) those areas which can be improved upon in future assignments.
5. After each essay is commented on and corrected, the assessor scores the essay on each of four key metrics, noted on the Writing Rubric (see Section 3).
6. After the assessment process is completed for all essays in a particular course, the scores are tallied and essays are either (a) returned to the course instructor as hard-copies, who then distributes the essays to each individual student, or (b) returned to the individual student as soft-copies via Canvas.
7. As part of the returned materials, students also receive one of two letters indicating either a successful level of assessment or an unsuccessful level. Both of these letters, however, detail the writing and communication support services available to all School of Business students, which are as follows:
   1. **On Campus Support:** Free and professional writing and communication specialists are available as part of the Writing & Communications Center (WCC) at Stevens. The WCC is located on campus and appointments are available Monday to Friday.
   2. **Online Materials:** The following link provides online resources that explain and assist in the development of key writing considerations. While an attempt has been made to group the materials by subject matter, several sites offer robust resources that span multiple areas.