

## **AN ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR POM PROGRAM IN AN AACSB ACCREDITED UNIVERSITY**

**By**

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### **ABSTRACT**

While nations manufacturing and service industries, in their efforts to become more competitive, are orienting themselves for global competitiveness, our old and antique universities are still teaching the classical theories and practices of Management. The content and composition of a Management program today do not match the needs of the current industries and businesses. Most of the Management programs use a classical approach which is almost obsolete in perspective of new competitive and global manufacturing and service management. Majority of the text books, despite of numerous revisions and editions, still presents study materials which are either too theoretical for any real life application or almost obsolete for current dynamic manufacturing and service environments. In order to improve the effectiveness of a Management program plans must be developed for continuously upgrading the program in perspective of the needs of its clients (the students, industries, services, and the society as a whole). The North Central Accreditation authority and also American Association of Collegiate School of Business are requiring universities to provide an academic assessment plan for all university programs, and Management is one of them [6]. This thrust by the accreditation authorities has already brought an awareness among many universities about the effectiveness of their various academic programs, many of which could have been already outdated [4].

This paper emphasizes the urgent needs for quality assessment of academic programs in American Universities and attempts to develop an academic assessment model for higher education specially applicable for evaluating a Production & Operations Management program.

**KEY WORDS: ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR EVALUATING A POM PROGRAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

While our nations manufacturing and service industries, in their efforts to become more competitive, are orienting themselves for global competitiveness, our old and antique universities are still teaching the classical theories and practices of Production and Operations Management (POM). The content and composition of a POM program today do not match the needs of the current industries and businesses. Most of the POM programs use a classical approach to POM which is almost obsolete in perspective of new competitive and global manufacturing and service management. Majority of the text books, despite of numerous revisions and editions, still presents study materials which are either too theoretical for any real life application or almost obsolete for current dynamic manufacturing and service environments. In order to improve the effectiveness of a POM program plans must be developed for continuously upgrading the program in perspective of the needs of its clients (the students, industries, services, and the society as a whole). The North Central Accreditation authority and also American Association of Collegiate School of Business are requiring universities to provide an academic assessment plan for all university programs, including the POM [6]. This requirement by the accreditation authorities has already brought an awareness among many universities about the effectiveness of their various academic programs, many of which may possibly become outdated [4]. This paper emphasizes the critical need for quality assessment of academic programs in our universities, presents an academic assessment model and a methodology for developing an academic assessment plan for a POM program in an AACSB accredited university.

## **NEED FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

In order to meet the challenge of the tomorrow's industries, businesses, and society any academic program must be continuously reviewed and upgraded, and the POM program is no exception. With fast growing technological revolution, industries and businesses are demanding from college graduates a large dimension of conceptual, analytical, and personal skills which most POM programs are unable to deliver [3]. Therefore, there is a continuous demand from the nation's businesses to continuously improve and upgrade university's programs. The university's accreditation agencies such as AACSB and other regional accreditation agencies such as NCAA are mandating for outcome assessment of any academic program as a requirement for retaining accreditation [2]. Besides, the government appropriation authorities for funding higher education are demanding continuous review of academic programs based upon cost/benefit criteria which

requires competitive resource allocation strategies based upon continuous quality improvement (CQI). Thus, CQI is becoming an essential strategy for survival for any academic program in nation's institution for higher education [5].

### **DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSESSMENT PLANNING MODEL FOR A POM PROGRAM IN AN AACSB ACCREDITED UNIVERSITY**

The process of conceptualizing and implementing Academic Assessment has been widely accepted as the responsibility of the faculty directly responsible for the particular program [1]. Maximum involvement and ownership of assessment is only possible by making the appropriate academic departments, units, or curricular bodies the prime agents of all assessment activities. Therefore, POM curricular body should have the sole ownership and responsibility on academic assessment of a POM program. Figure 1 represents a model academic assessment plan for a POM program in an AACSB accredited primarily undergraduate institution and Table 1 list the essential elements of an effective academic assessment plan.

Academic assessment plans must be linked with mission, goals, and objectives for student learning [2]. Therefore, POM curricular body should proceed in developing the assessment plan by defining explicitly the goals and objectives of student learning and achievement, so that they link assessment activities directly with the program goals and objectives, which in turn, articulated with the department's, school's and university's missions and goals. The curricular body should describe the skills and knowledge it expects its student to gain, and how the curricula helps in developing them. One of the most effective way to do this will be "curriculum mapping" which involves review of program design and course syllabi on a regular basis in order to determine.

**Institution's Mission:** *The principal focus of the university's program is undergraduate education in liberal arts, science, and business with direct career related professional fields*

**Institution's Goal:** *All graduates will develop in depth understanding in their area of major and will be able to prepare for a career after graduation.*

**POM Program's Objectives:**

1. *POM graduates will have on hand training in Micro-MRP Systems*
2. *POM graduates will have knowledge of SPC, and Quality Auditing*
2. *POM graduates will be prepared for entry level jobs in POM related areas*
  - (1) *Quality Management, and*
  - (2) *Materials Management*

**Assessment Criteria and Procedures**

1. *All students completing the POM program will receive at least ten hours of hand on training in Micro-MRP system, and complete an MRP project.*
2. *All students completing the POM program will complete a course on Quality Control Techniques, and Quality Assurance and Auditing.*
3. *At least 80% of all POM graduates will pass at least one module of CPIM Examination of APICS*

**Assessment Instruments**

1. *Alumni survey*
2. *Completion of MRP class project*
3. *Employer survey*
4. *Survey in capstan course*

**Time Table**

- Once a year Alumni survey*
- Once a year employer survey*
- Each semester a test in capstan course*

**Feedback to department curricular body**

*Results of the surveys will be reported to departmental curricular body*

**Feedback to students**

*Results of the surveys will be reported to student through advising process*

**Cost-effectiveness**

1. *Same university alumni survey will be used without duplication*
2. *Same employer survey by Placement and Career Development Center will be used without duplication*
3. *Test in the capstan course will be an integral part of the course*

Figure 1. A model academic quality assessment plan for a POM program as an example

**Table 1. Essential Elements of an Effective Academic Assessment Plan**

1. Statement of missions, goals, and objectives for student learning/achievements
2. Linkage of assessment plans to mission, goals, and objectives
3. Plans must be comprehensive in terms of scope and conceptualization
4. Plans must address diversity and equity
5. Plans must be developed and administered by curricular body/academic unit
6. Plans must have faculty ownership, responsibility, and support
7. Plans must have mechanism for feed back to students and the unit
8. Plans must have realistic time table for implementation
9. Plans must be cost-effective
10. Plans must provide a mechanism for continuous improvement of programs
11. Plans must provide a mechanism for evaluation of assessment plans

whether programs goals and objectives for student learning and achievement are reflected in the way it design and deliver its program. The curricular body then determine the assessment criteria and procedures. It should also design the assessment instruments and vehicle for assessments. Those instruments and procedures must be not be duplicate efforts and must be cost-effective. Since gathering of student learning assessment data may very well could be duplicated by various units, and costly, it is important that assessment activities be cost effective. Data collection using sampling of students, embedding assessment activities into classroom instruction, assessing students in capstone courses, and cooperating with other curricular body in assessment data gathering could prove to be highly cost effective.

For implementation of assessment plans, the curricular body, over a long period of time, need to develop various measures for gathering academic outcome information. Since no single measurement strategy is perfect, it is important that the curricular body develops multiple and diverse ways of gathering information to determine to what degree any one or more particular learning objectives have been achieved. At the same time, it is essential that a realistic time table be developed for implementation of the assessment plan and that adequate resources be allocated for successful implementation.

## CONCLUSION

Finally, the assessment initiative must lead to continuous improvement in student learning. By placing the responsibility of assessment on faculty and by empowering them with program design, curriculum change, and course assignment continuous quality improvement can be assured. A mechanism must be in place to review assessment information and translate information on the desirability for program changes into implementation for those changes. When program changes are needed, the department or curricular body need to initiate appropriate changes in curriculum, course content, pedagogy, and so forth. Similarly, assessment information must be incorporated into student advising for guiding them into proper career path and choices.

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