

**AACSB International
Continuous Improvement Review Report
Fifth Year Continuous Improvement Report
Spring 2022**



**Gordon Ford College of Business
Accounting Programs**



Western Kentucky University

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REPORT

Overview

Situational Analysis

Western Kentucky University and the Gordon Ford College of Business

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is located 60 miles north of Nashville, TN, and just over 100 miles south of Louisville, KY. WKU's main campus is in Bowling Green, KY - a city with approximately 70,000 residents. With an ethnically diverse population, more than 85 languages are spoken in and around Bowling Green, and people from 35 nationalities call our community home.

WKU is a student-centered, applied-research institution committed to providing its students with a transformative academic and social experience and to elevating its surrounding communities. Founded in 1906, WKU is the third largest undergraduate institution in the Commonwealth of Kentucky with approximately 16,750 students (14,700 undergraduate; 31% first generation, 17.5% underrepresented minority) and roughly 2,500 faculty and staff employees in Fall 2021.

The faculty and staff of the Gordon Ford College of Business (GFCB) are dedicated to providing high-quality business education and meeting the needs of our constituents. GFCB is one of five academic colleges at WKU. This University is one of eight public universities in Kentucky. Although WKU was established officially in 1906 as the Western Kentucky State Normal School and later Western Kentucky University in 1966, the College finds its roots as the Southern Normal School and Business College and later the Bowling Green Business University (BU), founded in 1884. The business college was accredited by AACSB International in 1982 and was renamed the Gordon Ford College of Business in 1998 in recognition and appreciation of a \$10 million gift by Gordon Ford, 1934 BU alum. The Gordon Ford College of Business became only the second named business school in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Department of Accounting

Much of BU's tremendous success has been attributed to the accomplishments of its numerous successful accounting graduates. These BU accounting graduates went on to successful careers and were recognized as business leaders throughout the region and nation. Currently, the Department of Accounting is one of six departments in the College. It was granted supplemental AACSB Accounting Accreditation in 2009 and traces its origin to Bowling Green Business University. In addition to a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, the Department offers a Master of Accountancy (Accountancy and Data Analysis).

The graduates of BU widely acknowledged the excellent education they received at BU under the tutelage of colorful accounting professors such as James R. Meany and J. C. Holland, both practicing Bowling Green CPAs at the time. As a result, BU graduates have been eager to extend the BU tradition of excellence to the College and the Department of Accounting. BU alumni established the Meany–Holland Fund to provide two professorships in Accounting in honor of their beloved accounting professors, Mr. Meany and Mr. Holland. Although the goal for the Meany-Holland Fund was \$1 million, many loyal BU alumni continue to make contributions to the fund, which currently has a balance of nearly \$2 million. The Accounting program is proud of its BU legacy and seeks to honor and build upon BU’s tradition of excellence.

Organizational Structure and Environment

Administrative changes have occurred at the University, College, and Departmental level throughout the past five years. Dr. Timothy C. Caboni began his tenure as president of the University on July 1, 2017. Dr. David Lee, interim Provost and VP of Academic Affairs, was succeeded by Dr. Terry Ballman on July 1, 2018. Dr. Ballman served less than a year before being replaced by interim Provost Cheryl Stevens, Ogden College Dean. Dr. Robert “Bud” Fischer, Jr. assumed the position on July 1, 2021.

In the College, Dean Jeffrey Katz returned to the faculty on July 1, 2018. Dr. Catherine Carey, Professor of Economics, became interim chair while a search ensued to secure a permanent dean. Dr. Christopher Shook began his tenure as Dean of the College on July 1, 2019. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Michelle Trawick, Associate Dean, took a position as Associate Provost. She subsequently left the University to assume a deanship at the University of Nebraska Omaha. Dr. Evelyn Thrasher was appointed to the Associate Dean position in the Fall of 2019, and Dr. Robert Hale became Associate Provost in February 2020.

Regarding the Accounting Department, Dr. Harold Little retired in June 2019. An internal search was conducted to find and name a new chair for the Department. The search committee recommended Dr. Mark Ross, and his appointment as Chair of the Department of Accounting became effective on July 1, 2019.

In the Fall of 2021, there were 265 undergraduate accounting majors with 12 of the College’s full-time faculty members holding appointments in the Department of Accounting. In addition, 10 of the 12 accounting faculty held terminal degrees. This number of faculty will decrease to 10 in Fall 2022 with 8 holding terminal degrees. The Department has hired an additional professor with a terminal degree to start Fall 2023.

Challenges

The global pandemic presented significant challenges with recruiting and retaining students. The after-effects of tending to students who effectively spent the last two years of high school in an online, often unsupervised, learning environment continues to be problematic. First, attracting students was difficult due to the inability to have high school students on campus or engage in recruiting events. These limitations presented a large barrier for first-generation students and underrepresented minorities who were more likely to need encouragement and

extra assistance in the enrollment and admissions process. Second, students' academic readiness, in general, suffered during a period of low accountability. This situation can lead to lower retention rates as students become frustrated and overwhelmed with the academic expectations and workload encountered in college. These events and the need to recover from their effects is reflected in our Departmental mission and strategic plan that focuses primarily on meeting the needs of students. Continuing to bring a significant number of under-prepared students through their college years and prepare them for life and careers will be a challenge. There are learning gaps and accountability issues that will need to be addressed in a continuous manner over the next few years.

As with most states, Kentucky's financial support of higher education has declined significantly. To help offset this shortfall, tuition at WKU has increased during this period. The University is offering more scholarships and assistance to offset the cost for first-time freshmen students who have minimum high school GPAs of 3.0. So, despite rising tuition, the University's commitment to student financial assistance offsets much of the increase. In addition, the University has moved to an RCM budget model called RAMP. While there are pros and cons to this model, the colleges with larger enrollments will likely prosper. For our program, attracting top students is critical to maintaining high standards and a quality education, but there is pressure from the budget model to admit and graduate as many students as possible. Our Department believes our alumni's financial support and desire to hire graduates from the program stem from the qualities and skill sets our graduates possess. We do not want the quality of our students or our program to suffer due to budgetary concerns. As expressed in our mission and strategic plan, identifying and recruiting a sufficient number of students who have the scholastic aptitude to perform well in the program is imperative. We are planning to use the new introductory survey of accounting course to help identify potential students; we participate in recruiting events across campus and in high schools; and we engage in social media efforts to recruit students.

Financial pressures manifest themselves primarily in the hiring and retention of high-quality faculty and provision of mission-critical student services. The University offered a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) in Spring 2021. Faculty and staff of qualifying age and years of service could retire early and receive a full year's pay (capped at \$100,000). While the Department lost a valuable, long-term office associate to VSIP, fortunately no faculty departed due to the program. Nevertheless, state-level budget reductions and lower admission rates have resulted in wage compression and salary inversion pressures in the Department. Prior to the Spring 2022 semester, the Department was fortunate to fill five vacant accounting faculty positions resulting from the loss of six faculty members to retirement and other employment cessations. We experienced two additional retirements at the end of June 2022, and a faculty member passed away in May 2022. The University granted us two faculty lines to replace these three positions (tenure-track SA and tenure-track IP). Depending on enrollments and the number of faculty needed with our curricula changes, Dean Shook suggested that the Department may be able to hire a nontenure-track Instructor in the future. The issue with replacing faculty is current market salaries. Market-driven salaries required to attract new faculty are much higher than salaries paid to long-time productive faculty members in the

Department, and the University administration is concerned about tenure density among departments (i.e., the high percentage of faculty with tenure or in tenure-track positions). Increasing salary demands colliding with current budget constraints means that hiring quality faculty will be an enormous challenge.

An additional challenge is the need for a modern business education facility. The current building, Grise Hall, contains the entire College of Business and one department from the Potter College of Arts and Letters (Sociology). It was built during the enrollment boom of the 1960s and has experienced many physical and mechanical failures over time. The most significant failure involves the environmental conditions associated with an outdated and difficult to operate HVAC system. Fortunately, the state legislature approved funding for a new building to house the College. The University has contracted with an architectural firm, so studies are underway for the design. The anticipated occupancy date is Fall 2025. The faculty are very excited to know that this challenge should be resolved within a few years.

The state government has begun to emphasize a more vocational approach to higher education and there is increasingly bad press over the cost versus benefit of a college education. This emphasis coupled with the reality of increased tuition rates for four-year universities statewide has reinvigorated the community college system in the state. The Department regularly participates in events on campus and in local schools that introduce high school students and their parents to the opportunities provided by a major in accounting. As stated in our mission, providing an education where graduates have the tools for a successful career is our top priority.

Finally, maintaining our connections in the business community will be a bit of a challenge considering the amount of turnover experienced in the Department over the past few years. Over half of the accounting faculty have retired during the previous 5-6 years. These retirees were very entrenched in the business and professional community. While the Department has replaced most of the vacancies, the pressures to obtain tenure and the process of transitioning into the community takes time. The Department needs to initiate and support efforts by new faculty in getting to know accounting professionals and alumni in our service area.

Progress Update on Concerns from Previous Review

- **After the University and the College of Business develop their new strategic plans, the Department should follow through with a more “formal” multi-stakeholder strategic planning process. (Accounting Standard A1)**

The Department formed a strategic planning committee in January 2018. The committee consisted of seven faculty members and an outside representative from the accounting profession, Mr. Joe Dan Beavers (CEO of LifeSkills in Bowling Green, 1999 alum of WKU, CPA with experience in the healthcare industry and public accounting). While the committee met twice during the Spring 2018 semester, the development of a more comprehensive strategic

plan was postponed until completion of the University and College respective plans. The Department agreed to continue using the goals of the prior strategic plan until a new one could be developed.

The University introduced its strategic plan, *Climbing to Greater Heights*, at the start of the Fall 2018 semester. The College launched its strategic planning task force shortly thereafter. The progress of the task force slowed considerably due to the disruption caused by COVID-related campus shutdowns and the immediate need to change to an online teaching modality. The faculty spent the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester focusing on the consuming task of developing online materials for their courses. The College task force resumed and concluded its strategic plan in 2021.

The Department's Strategic Planning Committee began meeting again in the Fall 2021 semester with the purpose of revising the mission statement and the Departmental strategic plan so that it will support the College and University strategic plans while also reflecting the specific purpose and values of the Accounting Department. A draft was distributed to faculty in the Department and an additional outside representative member, Ms. Shaunna Cornwell, (Chief Financial Officer, Bowling Green Independent School District, 2004 alum of WKU), for comments and suggestions at the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester. Based on feedback during the comment period, the committee made revisions and presented its recommended plan at the faculty meeting in April 2022. Discussion of the draft at the faculty meeting centered on the need to focus efforts on student recruitment, retention, remediation, and placement due to the potential staffing shortages and the residual impact on learning from the pandemic shutdowns. The strategic plan was again revised due to this additional faculty input. The final version was affirmed by a unanimous faculty vote in June 2022.

At a minimum, the Accounting Department Strategic Planning Committee will meet near the end of the Fall and Spring semesters to review the plan and evaluate progress on its implementation. The committee will provide a progress report with any recommendations to the faculty. Refer to page 13 of this document for additional information on our strategic planning process.

- **Provide better documentation of the programmatic changes being made from the AOL process. (Accounting Standard A4)**

Significant programmatic changes have occurred over the past five years at both the graduate and undergraduate level. The Assurance of Learning (AOL) process spurred most changes as our procedures ensure that our undergraduate and graduate curricula meet the current and changing needs of the profession and our students.

Undergraduate-Expansion of Intermediate Accounting to 9-hour sequence: It is important to note that in the prior maintenance of accreditation period (Fall 2012-Spring 2017), the AOL process demonstrated continued problems with mastery of knowledge in specific, important,

topical areas: Cash Flow Concepts and Accrual Accounting Concepts. That information coupled with a high percentage of students being unsuccessful in the Intermediate I course prompted the Department to revise the curriculum to include nine hours of Intermediate Accounting instruction (3 courses) rather than seven hours of Intermediate Accounting instruction (2 courses). The newly revised sequence began in the Fall 2017, the beginning of our current maintenance of accreditation period. The goal was to provide more thorough coverage of difficult topics in the financial accounting area.

Undergraduate-Removal of debit/credit terminology from introductory accounting course: In the Spring 2018 semester, the Accounting Department Strategic Planning Committee suggested the Department move away from teaching journal entries and debit/credit terminology in the principles of accounting courses (ACCT 200 and 201). While this suggestion did not come directly from the Departmental AOL Committee, the Department Strategic Planning Committee did consider the results from the College AOL exit exam and the fact that two nonbusiness programs across campus (Healthcare Administration and Sports Management) no longer require accounting (minutes from the October 2018 meeting). Feedback from other disciplines in the College and other majors across campus indicates the desire for students to have a better understanding of how to interpret financial information rather than the details of how to prepare the information.

The idea came to fruition when the College Core Curriculum Task Force began work in the Spring 2020. The Accounting Department put forth the idea of combining topics from the two principles courses into a more general accounting course that would serve business majors better. The new “survey” of accounting course (Accounting for Decision Makers-ACCT 110) was offered for the first time in the Fall 2022 semester.

Beginning with the Fall 2022 semester, ACCT 220 (Principles of Financial Accounting) replaced the predecessor principles course (ACCT 200). Faculty anticipate ACCT 220 will better prepare accounting students for Intermediate I since it is required for Accounting and Finance majors only. The expectation is that ACCT 110 will have narrowed the population taking ACCT 220 to students who have an aptitude and desire to complete the major. And because basic topics are covered in ACCT 110, the new principles course should be able to provide more thorough coverage and a better foundation for students entering the Intermediate I course.

Graduate-Curricular changes resulting in required Analytics courses: Indirect AOL measures, primarily survey data, gathered from students, employers, and members of the advisory council indicated a growing need for students to have basic skills in data analytics. Consequently, the Department voted to revise the MAcc program to include 9 hours of required graduate business data analytics courses and/or cybersecurity analytics courses. The degree was rebranded as a Master of Accountancy and Data Analysis. The addition of the courses ensures that our

program has the framework to fulfill the requirements of Accounting Standard A5. Work on the proposal began in June 2020. The revised program was approved by the WKU Graduate Council on April 1, 2021 and began in the Fall 2021 semester.

Looking Ahead

Undergraduate-Additional instruction offered in managerial/cost accounting topics: Student surveys obtained in the AOL process have requested additional offerings in managerial/cost accounting for some time. With the reduction of required courses in the newly revised College Core Curriculum, the Department can provide some additional offerings in these areas.

Approximately two-thirds of ACCT 110 (Accounting for Decision Makers) consists of managerial topics. While the long-standing Managerial Cost Accounting (ACCT 310) will have to review these topics and cover some additional areas that would traditionally have been covered in ACCT 201, the course should be able to get through most of the original course curriculum. Managerial Cost II (ACCT 311) is a new required course that intends to pick up where ACCT 310 leaves off. Adding a second managerial cost accounting class will enable the instructor(s) to teach more cost accounting content and will also provide the instructors with the flexibility to begin teaching data analytics content if they wish, consistent with the AICPA's suggestions for what an accounting program might look like to prepare students for the new CPA exam.

Additionally, a new course, Critical Thinking in Managerial Accounting (ACCT 410) was added to the curriculum in Fall 2022 as an elective.

Undergraduate-Additional instruction offered in business and accounting analytics topics:

Indirect AOL measures, primarily survey data, gathered from students, employers, and members of the advisory council indicate a growing need for students to have basic skills in data analytics. To meet this need, two accounting courses have been added to the undergraduate program. First, the new ACCT 410 course discussed above will be devoting approximately fifty percent of its topical coverage to accounting analytics in a managerial/cost context. The professor assigned to teach the course is attending a data analytics seminar this summer to hone his skills in teaching different analytics programs.

Second, another new elective course was designed to cover accounting analytics and emerging technologies in an audit-related context. This course (ACCT 412) is titled Data Analysis for Accounting. These courses (ACCT 410 and 412) were presented by the Department Curriculum Committee and voted on in Spring 2021. More information is available on the specific content of the courses on page 23 of this report, but both the advanced analytics course and the managerial course will heavily emphasize accounting analytics.

Finally, the Department curriculum committee will recommend in the Spring 2023 faculty meeting that the Department make another curricular change to the undergraduate accounting program that will (1) add Data Visualization (BDAN 430) as an elective and (2) increase the

number of required hours in electives to 12 rather than 9. BDAN 430 will help accounting students who are striving for a Certificate in Data Analytics to have room in their program to obtain twelve hours of business data analytics courses and fulfill an elective requirement for accounting at the same time.

Having three of our six eligible elective courses heavily devoted to analytics will ensure that students are exposed to these skills since they will be taking four of the six courses. The changes to add BDAN 430 and increase the number of elective hours will be presented and voted on in our first meeting of Spring 2023.

- **Formally evaluate the curriculum and learning experiences delivered by the Master of Accountancy program in light of Accounting Standard A7 and make curriculum adjustments, if necessary, to ensure appropriate development of MAcc students' skills and knowledge in information technology, data mining, and data analytics. (Accounting Standard A7)**

Standard A7 (prior to 2018): Consistent with mission, expected outcomes and supporting strategies accounting degree programs include learning experiences that develop skills and knowledge related to the integration of information technology in accounting and business. Included in these learning experiences is the development of skills and knowledge related to data creation, data sharing, data analytics, data mining, data reporting, and storage within and across organizations.

The Accounting Curriculum Committee completed a preliminary evaluation for adding Data Analytics classes to the undergraduate and graduate accounting curricula during the Fall 2017 semester. The topic of data analytics in the curriculum was also broached at a Professional Advisory Council meeting in the Fall 2017 semester. Several members of the council spoke out on the subject of "data analytics" as something our students should know. Some were specific in what they defined as "data analytics" and the skill set they deemed essential for new employees. Everyone agreed that a strong working knowledge of Microsoft Excel was highly desirable. The evaluation and subsequent faculty discussion at the December 2017 faculty meeting concluded that the current level of data analytics coverage was likely insufficient for the growing demand for analytics skills.

The immediate solution for the graduate program was to introduce more instruction in data analytics in the ACCT 510 (Advanced Accounting Information Systems) course and encourage professors in the other graduate courses to introduce more analytics-based projects. ACCT 510 was revised and retitled "Advanced Accounting Information Systems and Analytics" in the Fall 2020 semester. The professor adopted a new textbook, "Introduction of Data Analytics for Accounting." Fully one-half of the topics covered in this course have been converted to accounting data analytics. The professor incorporates 50 (40 in Excel and 10 in Tableau) data analytics projects into the curriculum.

ACCT 500 (Advanced Financial Accounting) incorporates analytics in a financial statement analysis project using Microsoft Excel. ACCT 530 (Special Topics in Taxation) also utilizes Microsoft Excel in a comprehensive project analyzing book-tax differences.

Given the expanding need for analytics in the accounting profession, outcomes from the AOL process, and our mission of providing an applied learning experience that will prepare our students for successful careers, the faculty voted to significantly revise the curriculum of the existing Master of Accountancy program. For students enrolling in the program in the Fall 2021 semester, the program requires nine graduate hours of either Business Data Analytics courses or Cybersecurity Analytics courses. The degree is rebranded as a Master of Accountancy and Data Analysis.

Assessment: Skills in data analytics and analysis are assessed using an Excel-based project culminating with a paper and oral presentation in ACCT 500 (Advanced Financial Accounting and Reporting). Most graduate students take the Advanced Information Systems course prior to taking ACCT 500, so the assessment occurs after having considerable exposure to the topic. The assessment artifact will be changing to a Tableau case in the Fall 2023 semester as all students enrolled at that time will have been subject to the new program requirements.

Substantive Change Requests

N/A

Consultative Guidance

Freshmen and Sophomore Retention Rate

Like many institutions, we face an issue with freshmen and sophomore retention. We would appreciate any suggestions/advice to enhance our ability to retain a larger percentage of these students.

Recruitment of High Quality Students

The Department of Accounting and the Gordon Ford College of Business desire to increase recruitment of students in three key areas: the K-12 education system; Kentucky's strong community and technical college system; and key diversity groups. We welcome suggestions and ideas to improve recruitment in these areas.

Engagement with K-12 Educators and Employers Beyond Geographic Locale

The Department of Accounting and the Gordon Ford College of Business desire to better engage both K-12 educators and employers beyond our geographic region. We welcome suggestions and advice on developing effective engagement opportunities.

Faculty Retirements

Maintaining adequate professionally qualified faculty over the next five years will be difficult due to pending retirements likely to occur among as many as six of the current 10 faculty. Because the market for academically qualified professors is tight and looks to remain that way in the future, the Department of Accounting is discussing strategies to fill these vacancies. We were able to hire a pedagogical instructor who has audit experience, but we lost one of our tax professors to retirement in 2022. Advice on any other strategic steps we can take to address a possible faculty resource shortage would be appreciated.

Research Quality and Impact

The College and the Accounting Department require that two peer reviewed articles be published every five years along with two additional scholarly activities to maintain SA status. We are curious about the criteria used by other schools, (of comparable size and with a primary focus on teaching), to judge the sufficiency of intellectual contributions. We certainly discourage the use of predatory journals, but other than those outlets, we do not differentiate based on the quality of journals or conference presentations.

New Degree Programs N/A

Three Areas of the Accounting Accreditation Standards – Past and Future Look

Strategic Management and Innovation for Accounting Academic Units

Strategic Management Planning Process

Toward the end of each academic year, the Departmental Strategic Planning committee reviews the strategic goals and identifies planned action steps and strategic initiatives. Results are reported in the final faculty meeting of the academic year so that any planned action steps or initiatives can be implemented over the summer or at the beginning of the next academic year. Proposed changes to the strategic plan will be reviewed by the Professional Advisory Board and comments solicited from the Board before revisions are brought to a vote by the faculty.

While the strategic plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be revised at any time, the current plan is effective through the duration of the University's "*Climbing to New Heights*" initiatives (2018-2028). The mission statement, vision statement, and strategic plan will be formally and thoroughly studied in the context of any updated University and College strategic plans upon their implementation. In the event major changes occur at the College or University level resulting in changes to the University or the College Strategic Plan before the 2028 timeline, the Department will undergo a formal review of our strategic plan at that time thus ensuring compliance with institutional goals and objectives.

The newly revised Strategic Plan provides the framework for delivering on our student-focused mission, and it aligns perfectly with the University and College mission statements. The Department will benefit from University and College-level initiatives for faculty development and community outreach. While the Department will be supportive of and supported by those efforts, our focus for now will be directed toward student engagement, innovative teaching techniques and research efforts, and impacting students by remaining current in our discipline, promoting DEI initiatives, and providing placement opportunities. The Addendum-page 16 summarizes forward-focused curricula changes as they relate to our strategic plan.

TABLE 1: CPA Exam First-time Pass Rates – 2019 Candidate Performance

	Candidates	Sections of Exam	Pass Percentage (National Ave = 57.1%)
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY	63	121	64.5%
Comparison Schools:			
Boise State University	82	148	48.6%
Illinois State University	161	338	61.2%
Ohio University	129	272	50.4%
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro	51	84	59.5%
University of Central Missouri	32	57	57.9%
University of North Florida	93	164	67.1%
University of Southern Mississippi	58	100	48.0%
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	100	207	60.4%
Western Illinois University	15	27	48.1%
Wright State University	37	70	65.7%
Competitor Schools:			
Bellarmino University	29	57	66.7%
Belmont University	45	87	59.8%
Middle Tennessee State University	126	203	66.5%
Morehead State University	18	31	48.4%
Murray State University	32	60	65.0%
Northern Kentucky University	54	94	46.8%
Tennessee State University	9	10	30.0%
Tennessee Technological University	59	106	45.3%
University of Kentucky	186	406	63.1%
University of Louisville	101	177	56.5%

Intellectual Contributions, Impact, and Alignment with Mission

A large percentage of accounting faculty is contributing intellectually as shown in the business report. Eighty-three percent of participating faculty produced intellectual contributions during the five-year period. The mission of the Department promotes a primary focus on relevant practical scholarship intended to apply existing knowledge in ways that impact the practice of accounting. Our mission also includes providing a quality accounting academic program. Consistent with this mission, 58.7 percent of the Department's intellectual contributions relate to the practical application of knowledge to accounting and a significant number of publications (13%) relate to teaching and learning, including work on creative and innovative teaching techniques.

The Department, along with the University and College, supports the production of intellectual contributions by providing funds for databases, specialized software, and research assistants. Additionally, the College and Department provide funds for faculty to attend and present their research at faculty development and research conferences.

- Dr. Minwoo Lee presented his research at the International Symposium on Business and Social Sciences in 2018 and at the International Academy of Business and Public Conference in 2020;
- Dr. Yining Chen presented a paper at the 2019 American Accounting Association Annual Meeting;
- Dr. Jason Bergner presented his research at the NBES Conference in 2020;
- Dr. Pinky Rusli presented two papers at the Ohio Region Meeting of the American Accounting Association in 2022 and one paper at the IMA Teaching Case Conference in 2021.

Senior faculty frequently pair with tenure-track faculty to assist with publication efforts. Dr. Yining Chen, Nixon Professor of Accounting, routinely engages with new faculty to mentor them in the publication process. She co-authored research with Drs. Jason Bergner and Melloney Simerly that was published in the book, *Advances in Accounting Education: Teaching and Curriculum Innovations* in 2020. The collaborative effort started shortly after Drs. Bergner and Simerly joined the Department and was submitted in 2018.

A number of publications are co-authored within the Department, demonstrating the collegial work environment promoted and enjoyed in the Accounting Department. As shown below, Dr. Chen co-authored four publications with graduate students, thus introducing these students to the research process:

- Y.Chen, S. Ortiz, M. Contri, and S. Chang (2021). Intelligent Process Automation: The Outlook of Internal Audit. *Internal Auditing*, 36 (2).
- Bishop, Y. Chen, T. Johnson, and A. Nunez (2019). Know More about Blockchain Technology. *Internal Auditing*, 34 (3).

- E. Meskovic, S. Ghezal, M. Garrison, and Y. Chen (2018). Artificial Intelligence: Trends in Business and Implications on the Accounting Profession. *Internal Auditing*, 33 (3).
- Y.Chen, T.E. Estes, R.L. Hanks, and Z.M. Ramey (2017). Big Data Analytics: Megatrends to Business Success. *Internal Auditing*, 32 (3).

In addition to intellectual contributions, Drs. Steve Wells and Nicholas Fessler serve or have served on editorial review boards of applied/teaching journals.

Given the emphasis on applied research and the focus on teaching and student learning stated in our mission and strategic plan, the intellectual contributions made by our faculty during the five year review period fulfill the spirit of AACSB Accounting Standard A2: *The accounting academic unit produces high-quality intellectual contributions that are consistent with its mission, expected outcomes, and strategies and that impact the theory, practice, and teaching of accounting, business, and management.*

Financial Strategies and Allocation of Resources

The University has an established infrastructure to support the various academic colleges and programs. Each year, the University and College approve operating budgets for all academic departments to ensure that the missions of the departments are supported. In addition to the resource allocation model of the College, the College Leadership Team recognizes the importance of building a permanent funding base for several of the significant student service areas that our students, faculty, and community stakeholders believe are critical to the continued success of the College in maintaining quality programs for students.

The College was granted permission to implement a \$15 per credit hour fee beginning in the Fall of 2015. Student fees are used to provide several support areas that benefit all students in the College including accounting majors. The fees are also available to fund specific activities for undergraduate accounting majors. For example, the fees are available to support professional presentation programs and presentations made by members of the accounting profession.

The Department of Accounting has achieved considerable success in attracting development funds to support the activities of the Department (See Table 2). Given the recent economic recession and cuts in state funds for higher education, these resources are of particular importance to ensure that the Department's mission is fulfilled. The faculty have worked hard to build relationships with students and create a culture where loyal alumni are eager to support the Department throughout their careers. To encourage alumni giving, all contributors to the Department of Accounting are recognized as members of the Accounting Excellence Association.

The Department greatly benefits from funds provided by the Meany-Holland Endowment, which is primarily supported by graduates of Bowling Green Business University, a predecessor of the University. The fund provides for two professorships in Accounting, the Meany

Professorship and the Holland Professorship. The \$1 million goal originally established has been met and the fund currently has a balance over \$2 million. Contributions continue to be made to the fund.

A third professorship to benefit the Department was funded by Mary R. Nixon, a 1977 accounting graduate and Vice President of Tax and Internal Audit for Yum! Brands, Inc. She contributed \$500,000 to WKU to create an accounting professorship. With matching funds from the state of Kentucky, the Nixon Fund has a current balance exceeding \$1.5 million.

Table 2 Department of Accounting Development/Endowment Funds (June 30, 2022)	Balance
Meany – Holland Professorship Fund	\$2,015,806
Mary R. Nixon Professorship Fund	\$1,565,411
Accounting Excellence Endowment Fund	\$459,499
BKD Fund for Excellence	\$100,917
Accounting Excellence General Fund	\$139,676
Harry & Jean Pearl Endowment for Accounting	\$78,972
Butch Armstrong Fund for Excellence	\$27,467
McAdams Endowment Fund	\$172,656
Total	\$4,560,404

As of June 30, 2022, the Department’s endowments and development funds total approximately \$4.6 million. Shown is a detailed listing of the funds benefiting the Department, ensuring financial resources are available to achieve the Department’s mission. In addition, there are also several endowed scholarships that provide scholarships for accounting majors.

The Department has used funding from the above identified sources to fund and support its strategic initiatives (Table 3):

Table 3 Department of Accounting Financial Support for Strategic Initiatives				
Initiative	Start Date	First-Year Cost or Revenue	Continuing Annual Cost or Revenue	Source or Disposition of Funds
Accounting CPE Program	2016	Break-even	\$500 (Revenue)	Dept. Funds
Unique Learning Experience for MAcc Students	Spring 2015	\$5,000	\$5,000	GFCB Student Fees, Foundation Funds
Scholarships for Accounting Majors	Annually	\$15,000	\$19,300	Scholarship Endowments for Accounting Students
Scholarships for Accounting JUMP students	2013 to 2019	\$1,000 per semester for up to 3 semesters per student		BKD Fund, Alumni Support
Becker CPA Review Materials for JUMP students	2021	\$25,600	\$1,000 per student	BKD Fund, Accounting Excellence General Fund
Accounting Leadership Scholarship	2021	\$1,900	\$2,800	Accounting Excellence General Fund
Faculty Professional Development Support – CPE programs, Dues, etc. (augmenting College support)	2012 to present	\$5,000	\$5,000-\$8,000	Accounting Excellence Fund and GFCB funds

The generosity and support of our alumni and the profession help us to provide resources for our students and faculty. These resources along with regular support from the state and the University fulfill AACSB Accounting Standard 3: *The accounting academic unit has financial strategies to provide resources appropriate to, and sufficient for, achieving its mission and action items.*

Accounting Learning and Teaching

Process to Keep Programs Current and Relevant

The Accounting Department engages in a process of continuous curriculum improvement primarily through (1) communication with our stakeholders and the profession and (2) our assurance of learning process. Faculty remain current in the field by maintaining relationships with accounting professionals, participating in professional and academic organizations, attending academic conferences, and engaging in continuing professional education.

First, communication with accounting professionals occurs formally and informally. The Department faculty typically meet formally with our advisory board and/or employers in our geographic area during the semester. Faculty interact informally with professionals during recruiting events, Beta Alpha Psi presentations, end of semester awards ceremonies, and

through email communications. For example, with upcoming changes to the CPA exam and the timing of faculty changes, Dr. Stacy Bibelhauser surveyed ten professionals from tax departments of firms who often hire WKU students for internships and entry-level positions. The survey was open-ended and basically asked which tax topics should be covered in the first, required tax course and which topics should be reserved for the second, elective tax course. Many interns are hired after only having one tax course, so ideally the curriculum should focus on topics that they may encounter early in a work environment. The advisory committee would not have been as helpful on this topic as much as a targeted group of tax accountants. As a result of the survey and consideration of the upcoming changes to the CPA exam, the curriculum is changing to better serve our students and their employers. The first course will now cover basic topics in both individual and business taxation rather than fully focusing on individual taxation. The second course will cover more complex topics in both individual and business taxation rather than strictly business taxation.

FORVIS (formerly BKD CPAs) typically meets with the Department faculty for lunch at least once per year to discuss recruiting needs and to report on how the recent interns and new hires are performing. Informal meetings often occur over lunch when firms come to campus to interview or participate in mock interviews with our students. These conversations always evolve into an information session on the state of the profession and changing needs in the industry.

Faculty remain current on the profession through the many professional organizations in which they participate, conferences they attend, and the continuing professional education opportunities they utilize. A popular choice for continuing professional education is the Kentucky Educators Conference that occurs in May of each year. This conference is sponsored by the Kentucky Society of CPAs. The conference always contains at least one session on updates to the profession in addition to great information on education topics. One reason the Department emphasizes and supports certifications for our faculty is the requirement that continuing education be maintained. This required continuing professional education helps to ensure the currency and relevancy of faculty.

The Accounting faculty's choice to maintain supplemental AACSB accreditation demonstrates motivation and dedication to stay current in the field. Electing to pursue this designation testifies that the Department is committed to ensuring the accounting degree programs address and meet the specific expectations related to the accounting discipline.

The core curriculum for the College was updated recently which prompted changes in the undergraduate accounting program course requirements. A College Core Curriculum Task Force was initiated in Spring 2020 and changes were implemented in the Fall 2022 semester. The task force consisted of one professor from each of the disciplines (departments), the College Assurance of Learning Coordinator, an academic advisor, and the Associate Dean. The task force gathered relevant information from several sources when developing recommendations. The data came from:

1. Alumni surveys
2. Business advisory council feedback
3. Skills Engine (which is a nonprofit collaboration between Texas State Technical College and the Center for Employability Outcomes)
4. Gray Associates Program Evaluation System (data system that the Kentucky CPE adopted for academic program review).

A compilation of the output from these sources is available in the Addendum. The task force agreed that certain “Workplace Essentials” and professionalism skills should be incorporated into the core curriculum. The revisions to the College core led to the development of ACCT 399 (Career Readiness in Accounting) which students will take during their junior year. The course is being designed and piloted during the 2022-23 academic year. Activities in the class will center around these workplace essentials. ACCT 499 (Senior Assessment) began incorporating assignments and activities that enhance workplace essentials in the Fall 2022 semester. The number of required courses in the College core curriculum was reduced leaving room for the Accounting program to include or add courses that best benefit our students. For instance, the core course teaching basic business law and the core 300-level statistics course teaching statistics and Microsoft Excel were eliminated from the list of classes required of all College of Business graduates. The Accounting faculty voted to keep these two courses in our program as these skills are pertinent to our graduates. With the reductions to the overall number of courses in the core, the Accounting faculty voted to expand the offerings of managerial accounting classes and add an advanced accounting analytics course. The following table (Table 4) shows a comparison of the prior program requirements and the current program requirements.

Table 4: Comparison of Program Requirements Before and After Revisions

Prior Undergraduate ACCT Program		Undergraduate ACCT Program (eff Fall 2022)	
College Core and Admission to Major		GFCB Academic Core	
51 hours		24 hours	
CIS 141 COMM 145 (C) MA 116/123 (C) ACCT 200 ACCT 201 CIS 243 ECON 202 (C) ECON 203 ECON 206 MGT 200 MGT 210 MKT 220 FIN 330 ECON306/307/MGT 313 MGT 314 MGT 498 <i>ACCT/Bus Elec.</i> (C)=Colonnade course	Analytics and Technology Fund. of Public Speaking College Algebra Intro to Accounting – Financial Intro to ACCT – Managerial Principles of Mgmt Info System Principles of Econ (Micro) Principles of Econ (Macro) Statistics Business Law Organization and Management Basic Marketing Concepts Principles of Finance <i>Statistics or Modeling</i> Operations Management Strategy and Policy	ACCT 110 BDAN 250 ECON 202 (C) MGT 210 MKT 220 ECON 206 FIN 330 MGT 498	ACCT for Decision Makers Introduction to Analytics Principles of Econ (Micro) Organization and Management Basic Marketing Concepts Statistics Principles of Finance Strategy and Policy
		GFCB Career Prep Core	
		6 hours	
		BA170/175/220 MGT 261 ACCT 399 ACCT 499	<i>Business student basics</i> Business Communication Career Preparation in ACCT Senior Assessment in ACCT
Accounting Major		Accounting Major	
28 hours		42 hours	
ACCT 300 ACCT 301 ACCT 303 ACCT 310 ACCT 312 ACCT 430 ACCT 450 ACCT 499 <i>ACCT elec</i> <i>ACCT elec</i>	Intermediate ACCT I Intermediate ACCT II Intermediate ACCT III Managerial Cost Accounting ACCT Information Systems Federal Taxation I Auditing & Assurance Services Senior Assessment	ACCT 220 ACCT 300 ACCT 301 ACCT 303 ACCT 310 ACCT 311 ACCT 312 ACCT 430 ACCT 450 <i>ACCT elec</i> <i>ACCT elec</i> <i>ACCT elec</i>	Principles of Financial ACCT Intermediate ACCT I Intermediate ACCT II Intermediate ACCT III Managerial Cost ACCT I Managerial Cost ACCT II ACCT Information Systems Federal Taxation I Auditing & Assurance Services
		MGT 200/MGT301/ACCT 440 ECON 306/307	<i>Business Law</i> <i>Stats/Modeling</i>
Additional Colonnade: 29 hours		Additional Colonnade: 36 hours	
Foreign Language and Electives: 11 hours		Foreign Language and Electives: 12 hours	
Total	120 hours	Total	120 hours

These processes and evidence of continuous improvement in our curriculum demonstrates achievement of AACSB Standard 4: *Curriculum is appropriate to professional expectations and requirements for each accounting degree program. The accounting academic unit uses well documented, systematic processes for determining and revising degree program learning goals; designing, delivering, and improving degree program curricula to achieve learning goals; and demonstrating that degree program learning goals have been met.*

Strategies for Development of Competencies in Learning Information Technology, Data Analytics and Technological Agility

Faculty are encouraged and financially supported when pursuing professional development surrounding emerging technologies. Forty percent of the faculty have attended webinars and seminars sponsored by the American Accounting Association, textbook publishers such as McGraw-Hill and Wiley, and other CPE providers on the use of analytics in the classroom. Dr. Nicholas Fessler and Dr. Pinky Rusli plan to attend the 2023 AAA Intensive Data Analytics Workshop in June. Mr. Braden Grant earned a Microsoft Office Specialist: Excel Associate Badge. The Department has offered to pay for professors to pursue the Excel Certification offered through Microsoft. At least two professors are planning to work on the certification over the summer. Looking forward, Dr. Jonathan Ross has taught accounting analytics graduate courses and is experienced in programs, such as Tableau and Alteryx, used in the profession. He will be joining our faculty in Fall 2023 and bringing that expertise into the classroom.

Developing technological skills and exposure to emerging technologies is foremost in the minds of faculty. We have a learning objective dedicated to this area which indicates that we consider these skills to be of utmost importance. The strategy for developing competencies in undergraduate Accounting students has been to incorporate the material into the curriculum as much as possible. Students are exposed to information technology, data analytics, and technological agility in several required courses throughout the curriculum. The Accounting Information Systems (ACCT 312) course incorporates three units of coverage on analytics and emerging technologies (Addendum-page 10). In addition, students are encouraged by their academic advisors, professors, and professional speakers to take electives in courses that will further their exposure to existing and emerging technologies. During the five-year period ending June 2022, 315 students graduated with a B.S. in Accounting. One hundred thirty-five accounting majors took a total of 372 upper-level business data analytics or cybersecurity analytics courses during this same period, indicating that approximately 43 percent of our graduates have exposure to analytics outside of the program's required courses. Informal feedback from employers indicates our graduates have sufficient entry level skills in analytics.

Courses (and their respective learning objectives) related to analytics required for Accounting majors during the previous five years include the following:

ECON 206 Introduction to Statistics (Required Business CORE Course)

- Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental statistical concepts and some of their basic applications
- Know how to organize, manage and present data
- Use and apply a wide variety of statistical methods
- Understand the fundamental foundations of probability
- Effectively communicate results of statistical analysis
- Be able to use statistical tools to enhance critical thinking
- Learn and use basic tools in Microsoft Excel

CIS 243 Principles of MIS (Required College CORE Course prior to Fall 2022)

Understanding the following topics:

- Collaboration information systems for decision making, problem solving, and project management
- Business processes, information systems, organizational strategy, and competitive advantage information technology
- Mobile systems
- Network and cloud technology using is for competitive advantage
- Social media information systems
- Business intelligence systems
- Information systems development, security, and management
- Fundamental spreadsheet skills for business scenarios using Excel
- Database processing and database skills to business scenarios

ACCT 312 Accounting Information Systems (Required Accounting Course)

- Knowledge of information technology as it relates to design, implementation, and operation of accounting information systems
- Knowledge of the conceptual foundations of accounting information systems (AIS), transaction processing cycles, the control and audit of accounting information systems, the systems development process, and a variety of data management and analysis software packages
- Knowledge of database technology and data modeling and their effect on an AIS
- Exposure to emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, data analytics, and blockchain
- Beginning in the Spring 2022 semester, two new data analytics projects were added to the course. Both projects require pivot tables.

Two electives that incorporate analytical skills in managerial accounting were added to the curriculum:

ACCT 410 Critical Thinking in Managerial Accounting (Elective Accounting Course)

- Enhances student skills in data analysis, critical thinking, and decision-making.
- Utilizes analysis tools such as Excel
- Encourages attainment of the Credly Microsoft Excel Badge from Wiley Finance and Accounting
- Beginning in the Fall 2023 semester this course will incorporate analytics programs such as Tableau and Alteryx. Fully one-half of the course will be dedicated to analytics in an accounting context.

ACCT 412 Data Analysis for Accounting (Elective Accounting Course)

- Provides students with a working knowledge of the database design, structure, manipulation, and management to support accounting decision-making

- Introduces the data analytics method and its applications to accounting issues
- Explores emerging technologies and their applications in the accounting profession, with an emphasis in information system governance, controls, and audit.

In addition to these specific courses, some undergraduate accounting courses began utilizing analytics within their curriculum. For instance, Excel and Tableau assignments and a short case in cybersecurity are given in ACCT 430 (Federal Income Taxation – Individuals). ACCT 310 (Managerial Cost Accounting) introduced analytics in two cases beginning in the Spring 2018 semester. And ACCT 450 (Auditing and Assurance Services) has used analytics in a case that accesses the EDGAR database. The ACCT 410 (Critical Thinking in Managerial Accounting) gives extra credit in the course to students who attain the Credly Microsoft Excel Badge. The students must spend 5-8 hours earning the badge. In the Spring 2022 semester, ten of the thirteen students enrolled in the course received the badge.

Beginning Fall 2022, CIS 243 is no longer required for accounting majors. However, there is a new introductory business data analytics course in the core. Although ECON 306/307 is no longer required for the core, the accounting program currently requires that one of the two courses be completed. A large portion of the courses' content is devoted to learning Excel skills. Moving forward, in November 2022, the Department AOL committee recommended to the Department Curriculum Committee that the accounting program curriculum be revised to include one required Accounting course that devotes all or a significant amount of content to accounting-related data analytics. The Department Curriculum Committee met in December 2022 to evaluate options for incorporating another required course into our curriculum. The committee decided against requiring a specific course but rather chose to alter the eligible electives in the program. The committee will bring a recommendation to the faculty that the eligible electives be expanded to 12 hours from the current level of 9 hours and that BDAN 430 (Data Visualization) be included as an eligible elective. Adding this course along with ACCT 410 (Critical Thinking in Accounting) and ACCT 412 (Data Analysis in Accounting) will cause three of the six eligible electives to be heavily based in analytics. Students will need to take four of the six courses. Thus, these curricula changes should ensure that students are taking at least one upper-level course that focuses on analytics. These changes support our mission of preparing students for successful careers in an ever-changing accounting and business environment.

In the graduate program, students are required to complete nine hours of business data analytics or cybersecurity data analytics or a combination of the two. In addition, 50 percent of the coverage in ACCT 510 (Advanced Accounting Information Systems and Analytics) is devoted to accounting analytics. Other graduate accounting courses, (ACCT 500-Financial and ACCT 530-Tax), also incorporate data analysis, but to a lesser degree.

In addition to getting a graduate degree, students who take twelve hours of Business Data Analytics courses (instead of nine) receive a Certificate in Data Analytics. Or students can get a Graduate Cybersecurity Analytics Certificate if a three credit hour business data analytics course is combined with nine hours of graduate cybersecurity courses.

Per Standard A5, we are providing *learning experiences that develop skills and knowledge related to the integration of information technology in accounting and business* for both our faculty and students.

Major Curricula Revisions

2017-2022 – Undergraduate:

Intermediate I, II, and III (ACCT 300, 301, and 303) A significant curricula change occurred in the undergraduate program in the Fall 2017 semester. This change was precipitated by the assurance of learning process. After several failed attempts of modifying content within Intermediate I to address low performing topics (namely cash flow and adjustments for accrual-basis accounting) and low retention rates between Intermediate I and Intermediate II, the faculty voted to expand the Intermediate course offerings from two classes (7 hours) to three classes (9 hours). Topical coverage over the 9-hour sequence was essentially the same as the 7-hour sequence, but more time was spent on the difficult concepts and certain topics received repetitive coverage.

Critical Thinking in Managerial Accounting (ACCT 410) - The Department considers additional program improvements, when appropriate, based on feedback from internal and external stakeholders. Surveys of graduating seniors (indirect measures) collected as part of the assurance of learning process documented student interest in having more course offerings in managerial/cost topics. Conversations and surveys from professionals indicated a need for better critical thinking skills. ACCT 410 was proposed by Dr. Fessler to address these needs along with expanding students' exposure to data analytics. The course is currently an elective that can be used to fulfill the requirements of our B.S. in Accounting.

Data Analysis for Accounting (ACCT 412) - This course was proposed by Dr. Chen due to the increasing demand in the profession for skills in accounting analytics. This course provides an enhancement of the data analysis tools/techniques used in the accounting profession. Course Objectives include providing students with a working knowledge of the database design, structure, manipulation, and management to support accounting decision-making; introducing the data analytics method and its applications to accounting issues; and exploring emerging technologies and their applications in the accounting profession, with an emphasis in information system governance, controls, and audit. The course is currently an elective that can be used to fulfill the requirements of our B.S. in Accounting.

Looking forward – Undergraduate:

Significant changes to the Accounting undergraduate program curriculum began in the Fall 2022 semester. The impact of these changes is yet to be seen. Early in the Fall 2021 semester, revisions to the College's business core curriculum required of all GFCB graduates, were approved by the College leadership team, and sent through the

University curriculum approval process. As part of the revisions, our Department agreed to develop a new introductory course, **Accounting for Decision Makers**, to replace the existing two required core courses (Introduction to Financial Accounting-ACCT 200 and Introduction to Managerial Accounting-ACCT 201). Due to the reduction of one accounting course and the reduction of other courses required in the core, we made several curricula changes to our undergraduate program:

Principles of Financial Accounting (ACCT 220) is essentially replacing ACCT 200 and is geared to accounting majors. Students entering ACCT 220 will have had a basic introduction to financial statements, the meaning behind them, and the accounts contained in them in the new introductory business core course, **Accounting for Decision Makers** (ACCT 110). Because ACCT 220 is only required for accounting and finance majors, the curriculum will be more rigorous than its predecessor (ACCT 200). Students completing ACCT 220 should be better prepared for Intermediate I than students coming out of the previous Principles format.

Managerial Cost Accounting II (ACCT 311) will begin in the Fall 2023 semester. The course is required for accounting majors who start into our program beginning with the Fall 2022 semester. A continuation of ACCT 310, this course emphasizes cost accounting practices, including product costing, budgeting, standard costing, and variance analysis. It addresses accounting tools, such as responsibility accounting, that provide organizational managers with information for planning, decision-making, and control. Students have indicated verbally and through open-ended survey questions in the AOL process a desire to have more courses related to managerial/cost topics for some time.

Career Readiness in Accounting (ACCT 399) will officially begin in the Spring 2023 semester. This course is part of the revised College core. Each department is responsible for developing a one-hour course at both the junior and senior level to provide guidance for and improvement of employment skills.

Senior Assessment (ACCT 499), an existing course, will be enriched by adding professionalism and career readiness skills to the curriculum. In addition to providing an opportunity for faculty to collect data toward the assurance of learning process, activities that benefit students as they exit our program are included in the curriculum. The course now includes a guest lecturer who provides “professional presentation” workshops, student participation in an etiquette dinner, enhanced feedback on professional written documents (i.e. email, memos, book reviews, etc.), required reading in career-readiness areas, and exposure to issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

ACCT 410, ACCT 412, or BDAN 430 will most likely have to be taken by accounting majors beginning Fall 2023. (This recommendation will be voted on by faculty in the

January 2023 faculty meeting.) ACCT 410 will incorporate analytics into a managerial accounting context. ACCT 412 will incorporate analytics into an auditing context, and BDAN 430 in a more general business data analytics course that will likely be chosen by students who are getting the Certificate in Business Data Analytics. This requirement ensures that students will be exposed to analytics in an accounting context and that students will be exposed to an analytics program such as Tableau, Alteryx, or something similar.

ACCT 430 Federal Income Taxation I (formerly Federal Taxation – Individual) -

Upcoming changes to the CPA exam and feedback from a survey we conducted with tax professionals in our employment area precipitated significant changes to the curriculum in our two undergraduate tax courses beginning in the Spring 2023 semester. Currently our required federal income tax course covers taxation of individuals. Federal income taxation of business entities is covered in the second course which is an elective. After considering the impact of the CPA Evolution and soliciting advice on the skill set most needed by interns and entry level tax accountants from many firms who employ our graduates, the content in the courses will be reconfigured. The course titles have changed to reflect the revised curriculum. This required course will consist of tax authorities (10%), basic rules for individuals (45%), basic concepts for business entities (20%), basic property transactions such as depreciation and capital gains/losses (15%), and basic book-tax differences (10%).

ACCT 431 Federal Income Taxation II (formerly Federal Taxation – Business Entities) -

This elective course will cover advanced individual topics, corporate topics, flow-through entities, advanced property transactions, and tax planning. Without receiving feedback from the profession, book-tax differences and all property transactions would have been moved to the second course. Opinions solicited from tax professionals in our area indicated that topics such as depreciation and capital asset sales were common enough that interns and new staff needed exposure to those areas. Similarly, firms requested that the first course cover basic book-tax differences so that new hires would have had exposure to the fact that taxable income and GAAP income are different. These examples demonstrate how our Department responds to changes in the profession and the needs of our stakeholders.

2017-2022 – Graduate: As previously reported, the Master of Accountancy and Data Analysis has a large focus on analytics. Students entering the JUMP or the traditional program in the Fall 2021 semester are *required to complete a minimum of nine credit hours in business data analytics and/or cybersecurity instruction*. In addition to these courses, instruction in analytics is incorporated into the accounting curriculum.

The graduate information systems course (ACCT 510) course was revised and rebranded as **“Advanced Accounting Information Systems and Analytics”** in the Fall 2020

semester. The professor adopted a new textbook, "Introduction of Data Analytics for Accounting." Fully one-half of the topics covered in this course relate to accounting data analytics. The professor incorporates 50 (40 in Excel and 10 in Tableau) data analytics projects into the curriculum.

Contemporary Analytics (BDAN 513) is a prerequisite for all other business data analytics and cybersecurity courses. This course utilizes Tableau and provides a comprehensive introduction and hands-on experience in data analytics, visual analytics, and visual data storytelling. It introduces students to design principles for creating meaningful displays of quantitative and qualitative data to facilitate managerial decision-making in the field of business analytics. It also demonstrates how to leverage the power of data analytics & visualization to communicate business-relevant implications of analyses. Modules are organized around concepts, tools, and applications, and cover the data analytics process from collecting, preparing, and analyzing data to creating analytical visualizations, dashboards, and stories that share critical business insights.

Most students completing the graduate program in the past couple of years have taken one or more analytics courses even though they may have enrolled in the program prior to Fall 2021. All students completing the program after Spring 2023 should be enrolled under the new program requirements.

Assurance of Learning (See Addendum-page 13 for a Summary of Actions and Outcomes)

In addition to adhering to AACSB standards, the University has a formal assessment program (Academic Program Review) in place requiring all academic and administrative units to participate in assessment activities. All academic programs at the University must satisfy assessment protocols for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation. The fundamental purpose of program assessment is to encourage continuous improvement in educational programs and administrative and educational support services.

The Department of Accounting has an assurance of learning (AOL) process based on the mission and strategic plan of the programs offered by the Department. This ongoing process measures the extent to which desired student outcomes/objectives are being achieved. Dr. Stacy Bibelhauser chairs the Departmental AOL Committee. The AOL Committee is responsible for monitoring the process, gathering the data generated by the process, reporting on findings, and making recommendations to the Curriculum Committee for improvements as deemed appropriate and necessary. While the AOL Committee directs the process, the entire faculty are involved as they conduct the assessments, review the results of the AOL Committee report, adjust course curricula to "close the loop," provide and edit questions on exit exams, and approve program changes when necessary.

Formal documentation of all activities in the AOL process is accomplished using annual templates, spreadsheets, supporting schedules and summaries. The results of the measurements are then used to drive improvements in programs. A template for addressing problem areas (Addendum-pages 18-25) was developed and is used to record the expected outcomes for the learning objective, the actual outcomes, and improvement recommendations and results. The “closing the loop” column documents the faculty’s discussion of the results, reports any changes needed or recommended, and provides feedback from the changes.

The AOL process uses both direct and indirect measures to evaluate our programs. Direct measures are discussed below. Indirect measures are gathered through surveys of our graduating seniors and graduate students. The surveys include their level of satisfaction and perceived mastery of learning objectives within the program. There are also open-ended questions to allow students to critique the program and offer suggestions for improvement. Results of these surveys have had a significant impact in shaping our curriculum. These surveys, coupled with feedback from our external stakeholders and professional organizations, were instrumental in the expansion of our graduate program to require analytics and/or cybersecurity courses. The graduate surveys also led the Department to switch from using Gleim CPA review materials to Becker CPA review materials in the program.

In addition to surveys, results from the CPA exam are used in an informal way to track our students’ progress. These results were a more formal part of the process, but NASBA hasn’t been reporting candidate performance since 2019. They will not resume reporting until after the CPA Evolution changes have been made. Consequently, the data has not been available to use in recent years.

Flowchart of the Accounting Program AOL Process



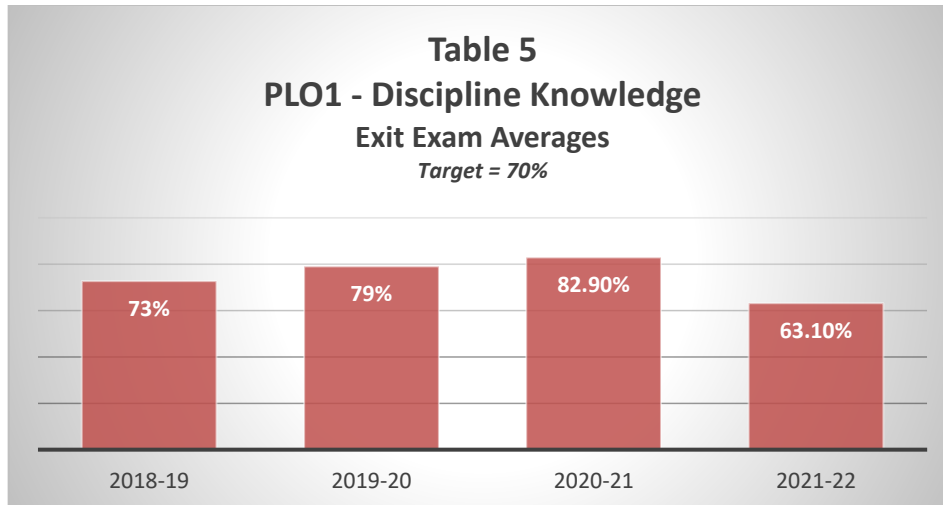
Undergraduate Program

Program Learning Objective (PLO) 1-Discipline Knowledge: *Students will develop an understanding of the basic technical skills and knowledge necessary for an entry level accounting position.*

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 1: *Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic technical accounting skills and knowledge in various tracks of accounting including*

- a. the basic function of each financial statement and the relevant classifications used therein;*
- b. the accrual basis of accounting and related topics;*
- c. the systems for accounting information and the skills for data management and analysis;*
- d management accountants' use of accounting information and basic cost concepts;*
- e. the sources of tax law and the application of these laws in the calculation of an individual's tax liability; and*
- f. the audit and assurance processes and an understanding of professional ethical behavior.*

A critical element for assessing Program Learning Objective 1 (Discipline Knowledge) is the senior assessment examination which is administered in the Senior Assessment (ACCT 499) course each semester. This multiple-choice exam, covering topics included in SLO1, is taken by all Accounting majors during their last semester of coursework. The target is that students will score an average of 70% or above on the entire exit exam and on each topical area. The results of the exam are emailed to faculty upon completion of the exam and the AOL committee formally reviews the results. Topical areas where students score below an average of 70 percent are examined by the AOL committee. The committee may recommend curricula changes based on the data. Persistent problems may result in program changes such as the increased credit hours assigned to intermediate accounting topics beginning in Fall 2017. Once the results have been reviewed by the AOL committee, the committee issues a report and makes recommendations to either the Department Curriculum Committee and/or the entire faculty. A summary of the results is in the graph below. Please see the Addendum (page 26) for an in-depth look at the results by topical area and further discussion of its use in the assessment process.



Overall, except for the 2021-22 academic year, the outcomes for Learning Objective 1 were met. Because outcomes had been trending up, faculty expect that the disappointing results for 2021-22 are due to the learning disruptions caused by COVID-19 shutdowns in the Spring 2020 semester, the on-going course delivery modality shifts, and the grading leniency (choice of P/D/F grading versus A/B/C/D/F grading system) imposed by the University administration for the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters. Students graduating in 2021-22 would have had the majority of their upper division courses during those tumultuous years.

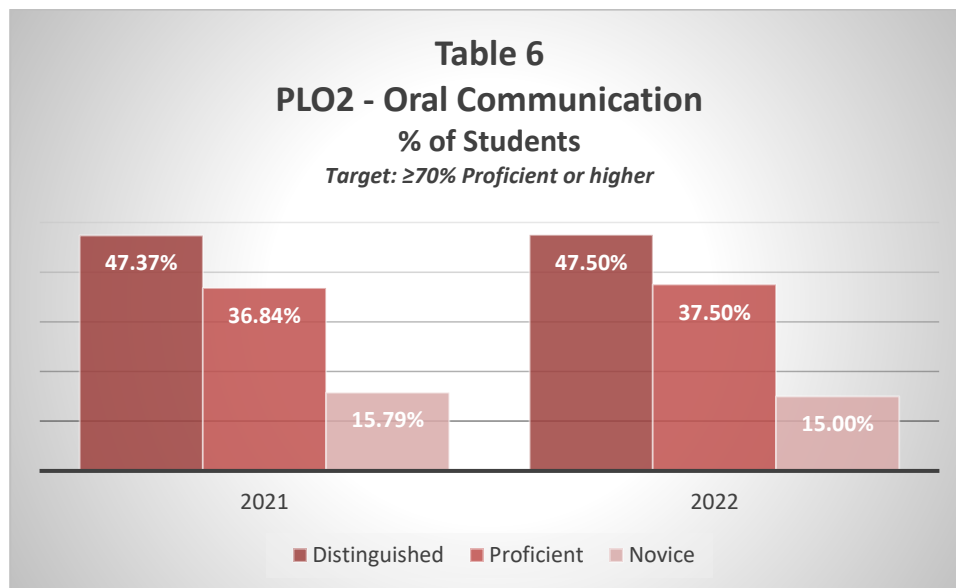
PLO2-Oral Communication: *Students will develop effective oral communication skills.*

SLO 2: *Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills.*

The AOL Committee recommended, and the Department approved, changes to the assessment method and artifacts used to evaluate Program Learning Objective 2. In the prior maintenance period, the Department used mock interviews to assess oral communication skills. Because students start the interviewing process well before their senior year, the mock interviews were moved to the Intermediate II course where the process will be more beneficial to them. Also, the prior AACSB team suggested that mock interviews did not adequately cover “oral communication” and that professional presentations could be a better artifact. In the 2018-19 year, the AOL Committee investigated the prospect of extracting oral presentation assessment data from the College ratings of presentations given in the College capstone course (MGT 498). In this capstone course, student teams present their final project. The idea of extracting the accounting student data from the team data appeared to be possible. The project, which stalled due to changes in the membership of both AOL committees, carried into the 2019-20 year. It was stalled once again due to the complications of the pandemic. Finally, in the 2020-21 academic year, it became obvious that there was no way to extract the data for specific students. Oral presentations were added to the ACCT 499 (Senior Assessment) curriculum and assessed in the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. The classes were sufficiently large enough

to get two good period assessments for assurance of learning purposes. This particular outcome for our students has historically been very strong. While we were not able to adequately assess it for a few periods, it was not an area of concern. In the future this learning objective will be assessed each Fall semester in ACCT 499.

The process of assessment works as follows: the class is divided into groups with approximately 5-7 students per group. Students in each group give 7–10-minute individual presentations on a chosen topic. Two professors are assigned to each group. They use a rubric designed by the AOL Committee and approved by the faculty to assess the presentations (see Addendum-page 29). The presentations are rated as Distinguished, Proficient, or Novice in total and on separately identified components of effective speaking. An analysis is prepared and submitted to the AOL Committee for review. A minimum of 70 percent of students should score at or above the Proficient level. The following chart summarizes students' "Overall" scores.

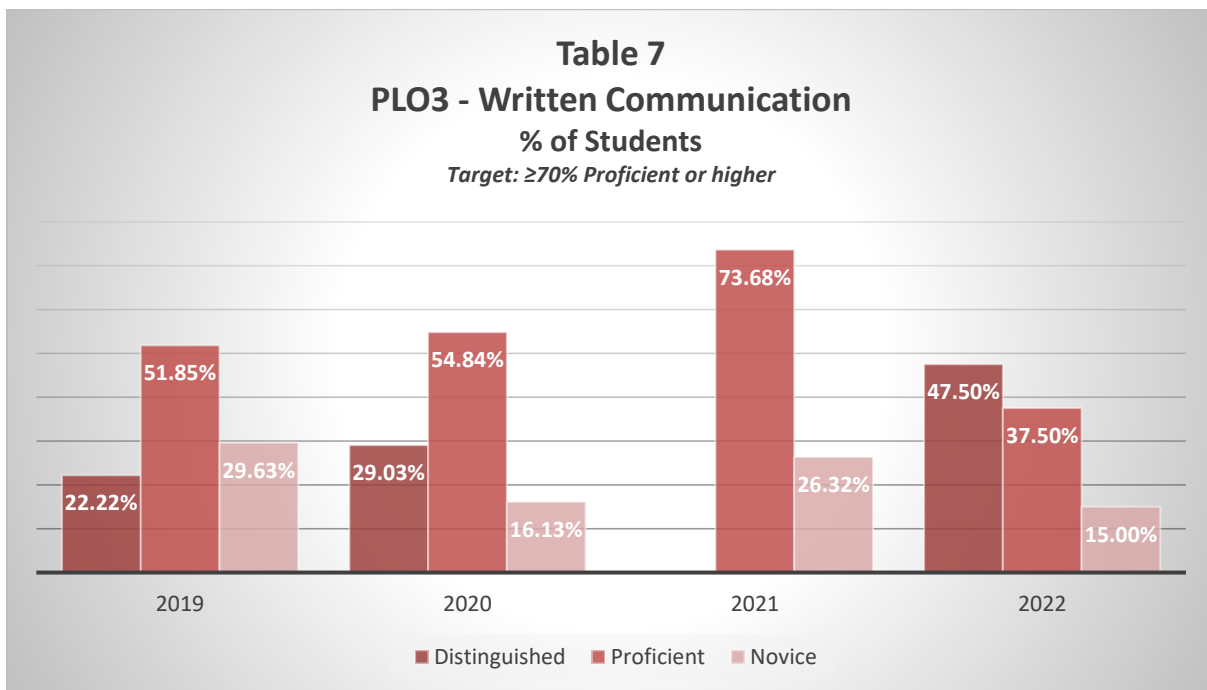


The target student learning outcome was met for this learning objective with 84.21% and 85% of students scoring Proficient or Distinguished in 2021 and 2022, respectively. This assessment procedure has worked very well and will continue to be used for the foreseeable future.

Even though presentation skills are notably good, Ms. Katherine Kile, a guest lecturer from the Communications Department at Penn State University, provided two workshop sessions in the ACCT 499 course in the Fall 2022 semester. The quality of presentations improved further in the Fall 2022 semester after this additional coaching. The extra instruction in presentation skills will continue in ACCT 499 by utilizing experts in this field.

PLO3-Written Communication: Students will develop effective written communication skills.
SLO 3: Students will demonstrate effective written communication skills.

Students enrolled in ACCT 499 are also required to attend and submit a report on at least three professional presentations during the semester. Using a rubric developed by the AOL Committee and approved by the faculty (see Addendum-page 30), each student’s selected assignment is assessed by two members of the faculty. The writing assignment is rated as Distinguished, Proficient, or Novice in total and on separately identified components of effective writing. An analysis is prepared and submitted to the AOL Committee for review. A minimum of 70 percent of students should score at or above the Proficient level. The following chart shows a summary of the “Overall” scores:

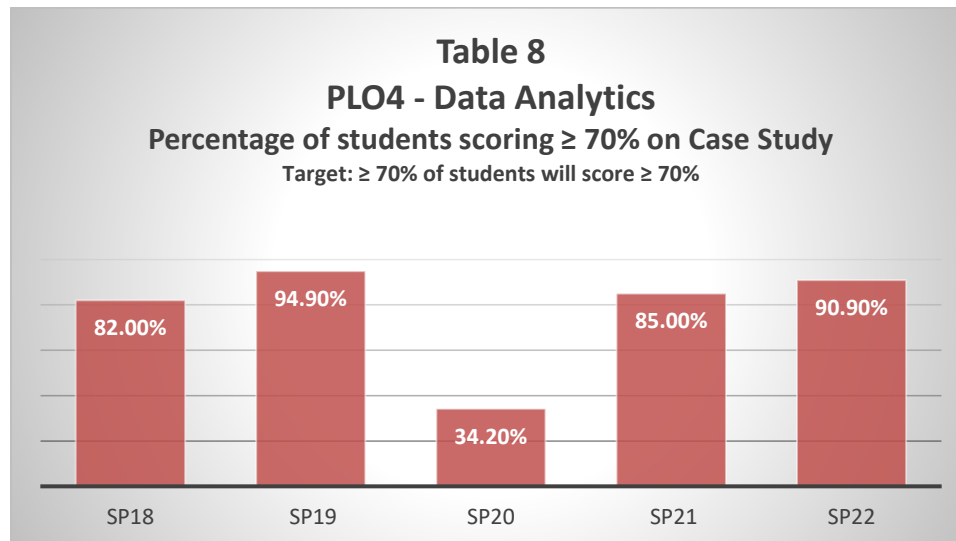


The target student learning outcome was met for this learning objective with over 70% of students scoring at or above the Proficient level in each of the four years assessed. This assessment procedure has worked very well and will continue to be used for the foreseeable future.

PLO4-Data Analytics: Students will develop knowledge of accounting data analytics using basic statistical techniques.

SLO 4: Students will demonstrate knowledge of data analytics using basic statistical techniques. Students enrolled in ACCT 312 (Accounting Information Systems and Data Analysis) are presented with a data analytics case to assess their skills and knowledge at the end of the course. This case assesses students’ ability to select appropriate analytical methods, select and

interpret raw data, evaluate outcomes, and present/communicate results. Students earn grades on each component of the project. An analysis is prepared and presented to the AOL Committee (Addendum-page 28). The desired outcome is for 70 percent of students to score 70% or above on the various components of the project and the project overall.



Of note is the disappointing performance of students in the Spring 2020 semester. While some of this result is attributable to the change in modality, it is more likely impacted by the P/D/F grading scale implemented by the University toward the end of the Spring 2020 semester. Students were allowed to choose on a class-by-class basis whether they wanted a letter grade (which would be incorporated into their GPA) or whether they wanted to use a P/D/F scale (which would not impact their GPA). Consequently, a student who chose the alternate scale could effectively cease turning in assignments or putting forth much effort if they calculated their grade and determined it would not drop below a 'C'. This particular learning objective was assessed at the end of the AIS course. It will occur in ACCT 499 beginning in the Fall 2022 semester.

Graduate Program (Masters in Accountancy and Data Analysis)

PLO1-Professional Knowledge: Students will develop an enhanced understanding of accounting and related topics including:

- *A stronger understanding of the business environment and accounting information through financial statement analysis;*
- *The ability to identify and address audit risk;*
- *A deeper knowledge of accounting information systems, internal controls, and data analytics applications;*
- *A deeper knowledge of managerial and cost accounting and its applications; and*
- *The ability to explore tax issues through authoritative sources and perform tax research*

SLO 1: Students will be able to demonstrate advanced-level accounting skills.

Beginning in the Fall 2019 semester, accounting and analytical skills are assessed using direct measures consisting of a Graduate Accounting Exit Exam and indirect measures comprised by exit surveys and performance on the CPA exam. Prior to the Fall 2019 semester, cases or complex assignments from each course were used as capstone projects. The AOL committee found that designing appropriate rubrics that were somewhat consistent between courses was difficult. Also, SACSCOC review teams discourage using assessment methods that involve the professor evaluating his/her own course. Consequently, farming out the assessments of graduate cases where the topic of study is not in someone's wheelhouse proved to be difficult, inconsistent, and frustrating for the raters. In 2019, the AOL committee implemented an exit exam. Faculty teaching the required accounting courses submitted objective questions related to the learning objectives of their specific courses. The AOL committee compiled the exit exam from those questions. It is administered each semester shortly before students graduate. The results are reviewed by the AOL committee and shared with faculty. This exam also serves as the capstone exam required by the WKU Graduate School for masters' programs.

Questions from the business data analytics course that is required for all students will be added in the Fall 2023 semester, as that is when the revised program requirements will impact all graduates. The Department expects that students will average 75% or above on this exam. There is a more detailed analysis of the questions in the Addendum (page 33).

Table 9
MADA - Professional Knowledge Results
Graduate Exit Exam
(Target: Students will average ≥75%)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Advanced Financial	n/a *	79.4%	86.1%
Advanced AIS and Data Analytics	92.6%	89.3%	89.2%
Advanced Managerial	n/a *	77.9%	86.1%
Advanced Tax	87.5%	92.8%	84.3%
Advanced Audit and Attestation	87.4%	68.2%	83.9%
Overall	89.2%	81.5%	85.9%

* ACCT 500 (Advanced Financial Accounting and Reporting) and ACCT 520 (Special Topics in Managerial Accounting) were not assessed in the 2018-19 academic year. Both courses had new professors teaching and there was an unexpected professor change in ACCT 520 due to faculty illness.

Surveys are administered to graduating students each Spring semester. The surveys capture the students' opinions on the success of each course in meeting the overall program learning objectives. A copy of the survey is located in the Addendum (page 38).

Graduate Surveys
(Target: Rankings will average ≥ 5)

	Spring 18 N=14	Spring 19 N = 7	Spring 20 N = 16	Spring 21 N = 4	Spring 22 N = 16
Professional Knowledge					
Financial Reporting	6.14	6.29	6.13	6.50	6.19
Audit Risk	5.79	6.42	6.31	6.50	6.31
Internal Control and AIS	5.71	6.14	6.44	5.00	5.63
Managerial Analysis	5.71	6.14	5.38	5.75	5.19
Taxation	6.57	6.43	6.06	6.50	5.88

1 = Little or No Success Meeting PLOs; 7 = Extremely Successful Meeting PLOs

PLO2-Professional Skills: *Students will develop professional skills to analyze data to solve organizational problems that include the ability to:*

- *Analyze a company's financial statements using both quantitative and qualitative information.*
- *Recognize the appropriate accounting analytic methods for particular organizational problems.*
- *Properly employ the procedures associated with particular accounting analytic methods.*
- *Present the output from accounting analytic methods in a form that is useful to organizational managers.*

SLO 2: *Students will be able to demonstrate professional accounting skills to solve organizational problems.*

The learning objective encompassing Professional Skills is evaluated using a case from ACCT 500 (Advanced Financial Accounting and Reporting) and using indirect measures from the Graduate Exit Survey. The assignment consists of a comprehensive financial statement analysis case. Students evaluate the company using ratio and trend analysis and complete pro forma statements to assess the company's impending issues. The project culminates with students writing a paper analyzing the company and a professional presentation outlining the findings. The learning objective was assessed in four of the five years under AACSB review. In each year, 100% of students met the overall criteria for being Proficient or Distinguished in their ability to demonstrate professional accounting skills to solve organizational problems. Survey results indicate that students also evaluated the program as being successful at meeting the learning outcomes related to Professional Skills.

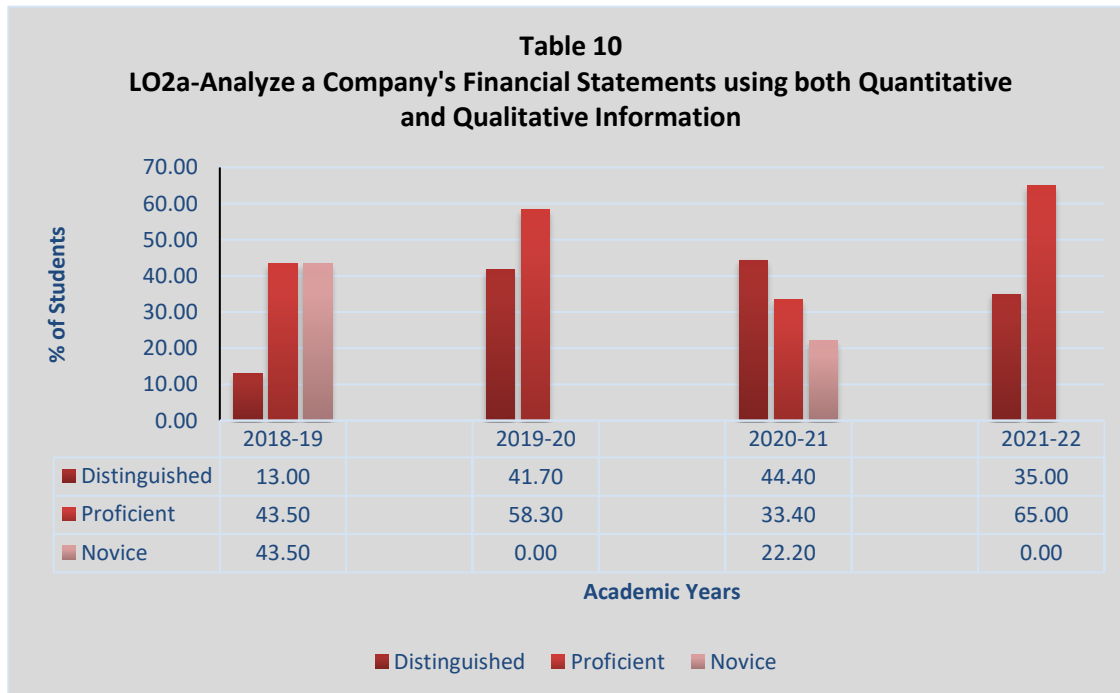
Graduate Surveys

(Target: Rankings will average ≥ 5)

Professional Skills	Spring 18 N=14	Spring 19 N = 7	Spring 20 N = 16	Spring 21 N = 4	Spring 22 N = 16
Research	6.36	6.42	6.13	6.50	6.25
Analytical Methods	5.43	6.14	5.69	6.00	5.19
Employ Proper Procedures	5.43	5.88	5.56	6.25	5.44
Professional, clear output	6.00	6.00	5.75	6.00	5.50

1 = Little or No Success Meeting PLOs; 7 = Extremely Successful Meeting PLOs

Although students did well on the project overall, in the 2018-19 academic year, 43.5% of students were rated “Novice” for their ability to “analyze a company’s financial statements using both quantitative and qualitative information.” This case required students to analyze a quasi-real-life scenario and make computations about the business based on its cost structure. Unlike most textbook questions, the costs were not classified directly (e.g., fixed v. variable) or tied to a cost object in an obvious way. Students were required to think about the business as a whole and decide on classifications themselves. Thus, when they classified something wrong, it affected their overall calculations. This result indicated that they did not have a deficiency in understanding fixed versus variable costs, but they did have trouble classifying them correctly in an unstructured context. Additionally, while the students answered the questions in the case, the majority of them were content to answer the questions at a bare minimum. They didn’t offer enough depth and/or reasoning to their answers.



To close the loop, the professor added more examples in class, additional discussion, and increased the number of practice problems. Students met the target in the following three assessment periods.

Because students entering the JUMP sign a letter of intent while they are in their sophomore or junior year, they remain under the academic program in effect at the time the letter is signed. Consequently, the last batch of students who matriculated under the old MAcc program requirements graduated in Fall 2022. The assessment artifact for professional skills is changing in Spring 2023 to incorporate different analytical tools and will include the data analytics process from collecting, preparing, and analyzing data to creating analytical visualizations and dashboards.

PLO3-Professional Communication: *Students will enhance their professional communication skills and will be able to:*

- Articulate thoughts clearly and concisely in professional business writing.
- Produce professional quality business documents.
- Deliver a professional oral presentation using appropriate technology.

SLO 3: *Students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in professional communication skills.*

Professional communication which includes written and oral communication skills is assessed in the Spring semesters. Writing assignments (i.e., a tax memo or client letter) are collected and distributed to the faculty for assessment using a rubric approved by the AOL committee. Each writing sample is assessed by two raters using a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 = Novice, 3 = Proficient, and 5 = Distinguished.

The assignments are evaluated on Content, Language, Decision Making, and Format. Seventy-five percent of students are expected to score at the Proficient level or higher on each of the criteria. In the five-year period under review, the target performance was met in each category in each of the four years assessed (Table 11). Further details including the rubric used for assessment and a breakdown by number of students per category can be found in the Addendum (pages 31 and 36).

Oral presentations are assigned in many of the required accounting graduate courses. The presentations in ACCT 530 (Special Topics in Taxation) are used as the artifacts for assessment. In the most recent assessment, the presentations were videotaped as students present at various time throughout the semester. The videos were shared with faculty who then used a committee-approved rubric to assess the students. Each presentation was assessed by two raters using a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 = Novice, 3 = Proficient, and 5 = Distinguished. Results are reported in Table 12.

Table 11
MADA-Written Communication Results

	# of Students	Content	Language	Decision-Making	Format
2021-22	19				
AVERAGE	1 - 5	3.89	3.95	4.26	4.26
Percentage of students scoring Proficient (3) or higher		95.00%	79.00%	95.00%	95.00%
2020-21	8				
AVERAGE	1 - 5	4	3.38	4.63	4.88
Percentage of students scoring Proficient (3) or higher		100%	75%	100%	100%
2018-19	17				
AVERAGE	1 - 5	4.41	3.71	4.29	4.88
Percentage of students scoring Proficient (3) or higher		100%	100%	100%	100%

(Scale 1-5: Novice=1; Proficient=3; Distinguished=5)

Graduate Surveys

(Target: Rankings will average \geq 5)

Professional Communications	Spring 18 <i>N=14</i>	Spring 19 <i>N = 7</i>	Spring 20 <i>N = 16</i>	Spring 21 <i>N = 4</i>	Spring 22 <i>N = 16</i>
Business Writing	6.71	6.57	6.19	5.75	5.88
Produce Professional Docs	6.57	6.43	6.13	6.25	5.81
Oral Presentation	6.21	6.43	6.50	7.00	6.19

1 = Little or No Success Meeting PLOs; 7 = Extremely Successful Meeting PLOs

Table 12: MADA - Oral Communication Results

	# of students	Organization	Content	Language	Nonverbal	Visuals
2021-22	19					
AVERAGE	1 - 5	3.32	3.21	3.21	2.68	2.68
Percentage of students scoring Proficient or higher		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	73.68%	84.21%
2020-21	9					
AVERAGE	1 - 5	3.67	3.89	3.89	4.78	4.78
Percentage of students scoring Proficient or higher		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2019-20	11					
AVERAGE	1 - 5	2.82	3.00	2.82	2.82	3.55
Percentage of students scoring Proficient or higher		90.10%	100.00%	90.10%	90.10%	100.00%
2018-19	17					
AVERAGE	1 - 5	4.65	4.53	4.29	3.94	4.41
Percentage of students scoring Proficient or higher		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

(Scale 1-5: Novice=1; Proficient=3; Distinguished=5)

The most recent year of assessment indicates a slight drop in the “nonverbal” or delivery of the presentation. Less than 75 percent of students scored at the Proficient or Distinguished level. As previously discussed, additional instruction on preparing for professional presentations was incorporated into ACCT 499. Future graduate students will benefit from this instruction as they all take ACCT 499 in their last semester of undergraduate work. Most students in the ACCT 530 course will have had ACCT 499 before entering this course. Further details including the rubric and a breakdown by number of students per category can be found in the Addendum (pages 29 and 37).

PLO4-Professional Ethics: *Students will gain an appreciation of the importance of ethical behavior in the workplace and will be able to:*

- Identify ethical dilemmas.
- Apply the principles in professional codes of conduct to various situations.
- Discuss the consequences related to ethics violations.

SLO 4: *Students will be able to demonstrate the principles in professional codes of conduct to various ethics-related situations*

Learning objective 4 (Professional Ethics) is assessed in the Fall semesters. A case is assigned to students taking the ACCT 540 (Advanced Auditing, Applications and Fraud) course. The artifacts are collected and distributed to the faculty for assessment using a rubric approved by the AOL committee (Addendum-page 32). Each ethics case is assessed by two raters. The assignments are evaluated on the criteria shown in the table below. Seventy-five percent of students are expected to score at the Proficient level or higher on each of the criteria.

Table 13
MADA – Professional Ethics Results

	# of students		Identification of Ethical Dilemma	Identification of alternative courses of action	Identification of stakeholders affected by the dilemma	Selection of alternative to resolve ethical issue	Determine which rights are most important
2021-22	15	Overall					
AVERAGE	1 - 5		4.13	3.8	5	3.6	3.93
% of students scoring P or higher		93.33%	93.33%	100.00%	100.00%	80.00%	80.00%
2020-21	14						
AVERAGE	1 - 5	4.08	3.68	3.82	4.32	3.64	4.93
% of students scoring P or higher		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2019-20	17						
AVERAGE	1 - 5	4.45	4.53	4.24	n/a	4.59	n/a
% of students scoring P or higher		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	n/a	100.00%	n/a

(Scale 1-5: Novice=1; Proficient=3; Distinguished=5)

Graduate Surveys
(Target: Rankings will average ≥ 5)

Professional Ethics	Spring 18 N=14	Spring 19 N = 7	Spring 20 N = 16	Spring 21 N = 4	Spring 22 N = 16
Identify ethical dilemmas	6.50	6.71	6.63	6.75	6.44
Code of Conduct	6.50	6.29	6.38	6.75	6.19
Consequences of violations	6.21	6.86	6.06	6.50	6.38

Demographics

The demographic make-up of students hasn't changed dramatically in the past five years. There are fewer nonresident students as a percentage of total majors. Under the prior president of the University, there was a concerted effort to recruit nonresident students. We had a relatively large population of Saudi Arabian students. This effort has waned in recent years, which may explain the drop in nonresidents. The female population relative to males has declined somewhat.

Accounting Majors	2016/17		2021/22	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Female	100	62.5	75	51.4
Male	60	37.5	71	48.6
Ethnicity				
U.S. Nonresident	12	7.5	6	4.1
Black/ African American	5	3.1	6	4.1
Asian	3	1.9	8	5.5
Hispanic (of any race)	4	2.5	4	2.7
White	132	82.5	119	81.5
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	2	1.3		
Two or More Races	2	1.3	3	2.1
First Generation				
No	113	70.6	102	69.9
Yes	47	29.4	44	30.1
Traditional Age (<25)				
No	20	12.5	11	7.5
Yes	140	87.5	135	92.5
All	160	100.0	146	100.0

Accounting Degrees Conferred	2016-17		2021-22	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Female	38	59.4	41	55.4
Male	26	40.6	33	44.6
Ethnicity				
U.S. Nonresident	10	15.6	2	2.7
Black or African American	5	7.8	4	5.4
Asian			2	2.7
Hispanic (of any race)				
White	48	75.0	63	85.1
Race and Ethnicity Unknown	1	1.6		
Two or More Races			3	4.1
First Generation				
No	37	57.8	51	68.9
Yes	27	42.2	23	31.1
Traditional Age (<25)				
No	10	15.6	7	9.5
Yes	54	84.4	67	90.5
All	64	100.0	74	100.0

Accounting Academic, Professional Engagement and Professional Interactions

Engagement with the Practice of Accounting

The Department understands and embraces the fact that academic accounting units exist to bridge theory with practice. Our strategic plan necessitates engagement with the profession so that faculty can remain cognizant of advances in the evolving, diverse accounting and business environments. Involvement in the practice of accounting keeps faculty abreast of changes in the industry which can be incorporated into the curriculum, thus adhering to our mission of preparing our students for successful careers.

The College's strategic plan and the policies for tenure, promotion, and annual faculty evaluations support professional engagement. Consulting activities and serving on boards for corporate and nonprofit organizations comprise activities that rank as "exceeds expectations" in annual performance evaluations. The Department of Accounting, as a unit, also promotes involvement with the profession and community by working with faculty on flexible class schedules and encouraging professors to volunteer or consult in areas where they are passionate.

The Accounting faculty engage with the profession and business community both individually and collectively as a department. The Departmental mission emphasizes lifelong learning. In 2015, the Accounting Department began offering an affordable Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Program for CPAs, internal auditors, managerial accountants, and other professional accountants in the regional area. The program combines expertise of faculty along with presenters from the profession to cover topics relevant to CPAs in the current business environment. During university shutdowns due to the pandemic, the Department pivoted to a virtual half-day program format. Over the past five years, faculty leading the sessions include Ms. Kristine Barron, Dr. Stacy Bibelhauser, and Dr. Melloney Simerly. Participation in the program grew from 36 attendees in 2015 to a high of 99 attendees in the Fall 2018. Participation in the face-to-face programs averaged 70 people over the five-year period from Fall 2017 – Spring 2022. The online program in 2020 was not as successful with only 24 participants. The program is returning to an in-person modality in 2023.

Several faculty are involved in service initiatives that not only involve the practice of accounting, but also have significant impact on the citizens and businesses in our surrounding area.

- Kristine Barron served on the board of Child Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of South Central Kentucky where her financial background enabled her to perform the duties of treasurer;
- Heather Glass serves on the board of Life Skills, Inc., an organization that supports individuals and families impacted by developmental disabilities and addition issues;

- Heather Glass provides training and consults on managerial accounting issues for KOBE Aluminum Automotive Products, LLC;
- Stacy Bibelhauser serves on the board of the Grayson County Alliance that provides a food pantry and a VITA program to low-income residents of Grayson County, Kentucky;
- Stacy Bibelhauser served as a tax preparer and site coordinator for the VITA program in Grayson County;
- Randall Kinnersley served as a member of the Government Performance and Accountability Committee (GPAC) of the AICPA where he coordinated the committee response to the AICPA Exposure Draft on Maintaining the Relevance of the Uniform CPA Exam;
- Richard Callahan is an appointed member of the Board of Directors and the Treasurer of the Kentucky Central Region Innovation & Commercialization Center, an economic development organization in Bowling Green, KY; and
- Harold Little served on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Society of CPAs.

Engaging with these organizations at the directorship level impacts the governance and direction of the institutions. Faculty participation furthers the profession while impacting the lives of many people throughout the region.

Representation of faculty on boards of directors has increased from 23% in the 2012-2017 maintenance period to 31.5% in the most recent five-year period. Looking forward, maintaining or improving this level of participation will be challenging. Five faculty who were entrenched in the business and professional community have retired. While the Department has hired four professors to replace those retirees, these individuals are new to the area and will face a period of transition and building relationships before serving on boards in the local area.

Consequently, the Department has discussed other strategies to promote engagement with the profession. These strategies include:

- Supporting service activities that utilize faculty accounting expertise in the regional area;
- Continuing to offer CPE programs to pursue relationships with local business professionals;
- Hosting events in the community and on campus for student and faculty networking opportunities;
- Conducting outreach opportunities with business organizations for development of ideas involving applied learning and research that can assist the business community;
- Visiting with firms and local businesses on a regular basis to nurture the relationship with the Department and community along with remaining current on the needs of businesses; and
- Engaging with the Professional Advisory Board on a regular basis; and
- Providing financial support for professional development for faculty and students.

Faculty Credentials and Experience

Seven of the ten current Accounting faculty hold professional certifications. Dr. Simerly had successfully completed the CPA exam and was in the process of completing the remaining requirements to achieve certification when she succumbed to her illness. While a professional certification is not required to teach in the Department of Accounting, it is listed as a *desired* qualification on all job postings. The Department encourages faculty to consider obtaining professional certifications and will reimburse many certification courses and exam fees. Other types of incentives are sometimes offered. In the case of Dr. Jonathan Ross who is joining our faculty in 2023, the College has agreed to provide a third year of summer research support if he passes the CPA exam prior to that time.

The Department supports maintaining professional certification by funding continuing professional education for faculty and reimbursing required license renewal fees. Continuing professional education exposes faculty members to current issues in the accounting profession and assists in maintaining currency in technical accounting knowledge related to their respective teaching areas. It also allows for networking with professionals, including many accounting alumni, who currently practice accounting or hold accounting related positions in industry, not-for-profits, governmental agencies, and financial institutions.

Many faculty teach in areas where they have prior professional experience.

- Richard Callahan was a partner in the tax department of BKD CPAs, a regional firm. He worked in the tax field for over 20 years before coming to WKU to teach the Federal Taxation – Business course.
- Braden Grant also worked as an auditor for BKD CPAs and is now teaching undergraduate and graduate auditing courses.
- Stacy Bibelhauser spent much of her professional career preparing individuals' tax returns and continues in this capacity through her volunteer activities with the VITA program.
- Heather Glass has nine years of experience working with nonprofit institutions. While she is currently teaching in the Principles courses, the Department is looking to utilize her expertise in either upper-level undergraduate or a graduate accounting course soon.
- Melloney Simerly worked as a project manager where she utilized managerial accounting skills. Dr. Simerly was in the process of teaching managerial accounting courses when she became ill.

Policies on Faculty Qualifications

The Department of Accounting adheres to the policy adopted by the College to ensure faculty qualifications in the College align with the 2020 AACSB Standards. This policy is available at <https://wku.chalkandwire.com/SecureUrlPage.aspx?urlId=189095&u=guest&cus=499>.

The percentage of current faculty who are qualified as scholarly academics (80%) exceeds the minimum AACSB threshold of 40 percent. Also, 100 percent of current faculty resources represent either Scholarly Academics or Instructional Practitioners per the GFCB policies and in accordance with the 2020 AACSB Standards.

To summarize, the professional engagement, credentials, experience, and qualifications of our faculty satisfy the spirit of Standard A6 and resonate with the Department's mission of providing *"an applied learning experience as a framework for lifelong learning to prepare our students for successful careers in accounting and business in an ever-changing environment."*