

ASSESSMENT WEBSITE INFORMATION

College: Business

Degree Program: Economics BA

Chair/Director: Jeffrey Pittman

DATA SAY:

The assessment of students' writing revealed a weakness in syntax, spelling, clarity, and cohesiveness. Recent evaluations have shown an improvement in syntax, spelling, and cohesiveness. Clarity on the other hand had continued to be a problem with some 50 percent being below expectations in this area.

SO WHAT:

The continued problems with clarity as evidenced by the high-end estimate of those who are below expectations tell us that our efforts to improve written communications are only partially successful. Clarity in communications is of paramount importance, and thus more effort on our part is needed to address this issue.

HOW WE CHANGED:

First, we've continued the use of the College of Business Writing Lab. Written communication has been a component of the principles' classes for many years, and that emphasis has now been extended to the upper division classes. In some classes we have adopted formal book reviews, where a student is required to write a five-page review of a predetermined book. In Economic Policy Analysis and Global Environmental Policies, term papers are required. In Export Policies, students work with Arkansas companies to build an export plan. All papers are reviewed and revisions are required as necessary to meet the college's written assessment rubric.

WHAT WE GOT:

Recent evaluations have shown that clarity has improved to some extent. Some evaluations suggest that possibly as low as only 10 percent of students are now below expectations in the area of clarity. Other evaluations suggest that the improvement has been more modest. In light of our continuing needs to improve clarity, an economic forecasting project has been added to the Macroeconomic Analysis class. Additional assessment data will tell the department if more enhancements are needed in our written communications efforts.

