

**Learning Goal 3:** Our students will be able to conceptualize a complex issue into a coherent written statement and oral presentation, demonstrated with the effective use of technology.

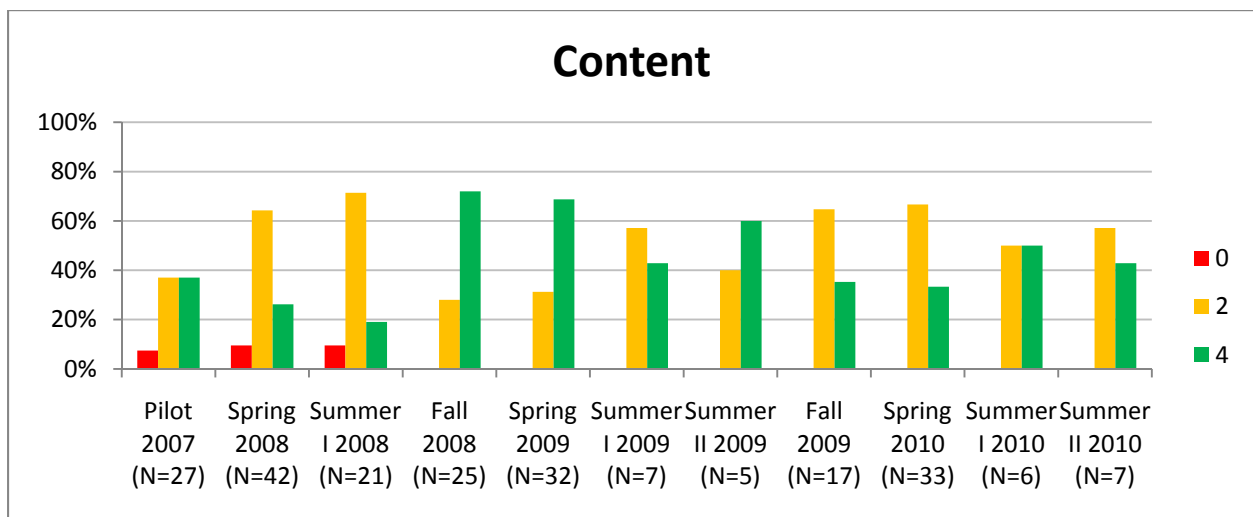
*(Updated November 2010)*

**Written Communication Assessments  
November 2010**

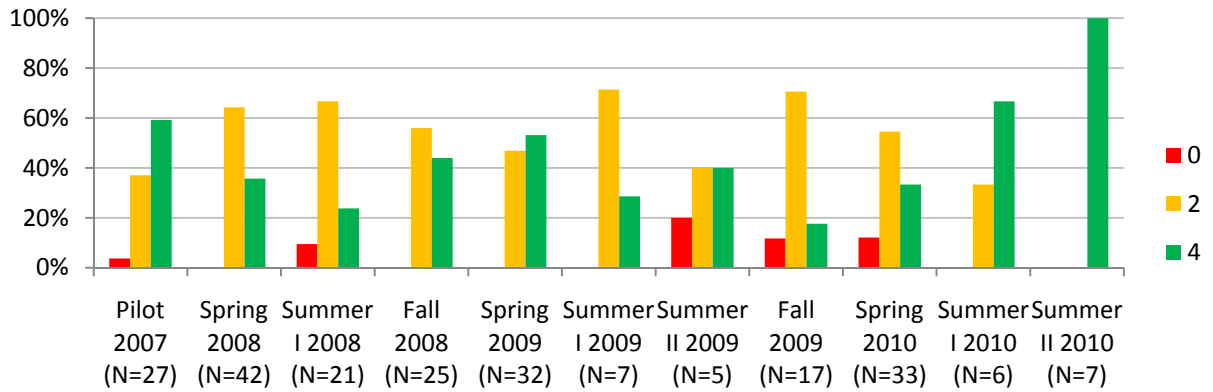
**Action Taken:**

The curriculum committee developed a sub-committee to investigate potential areas for writing improvements. The committee determined through statistical analysis that ETS was not effective. The curriculum committee determined to assess the extent “of the writing problem.” In spring 2009 a survey on writing effectiveness was given to the faculty and in fall 2010 focus groups are being conducted with students. Based on these results a new method of assessment will be developed.

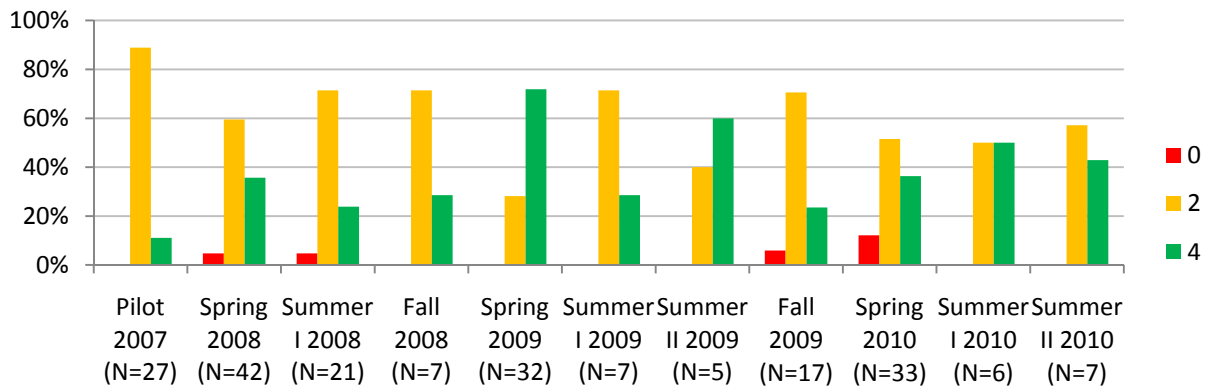
**Oral Communication Assessments  
October 2010**



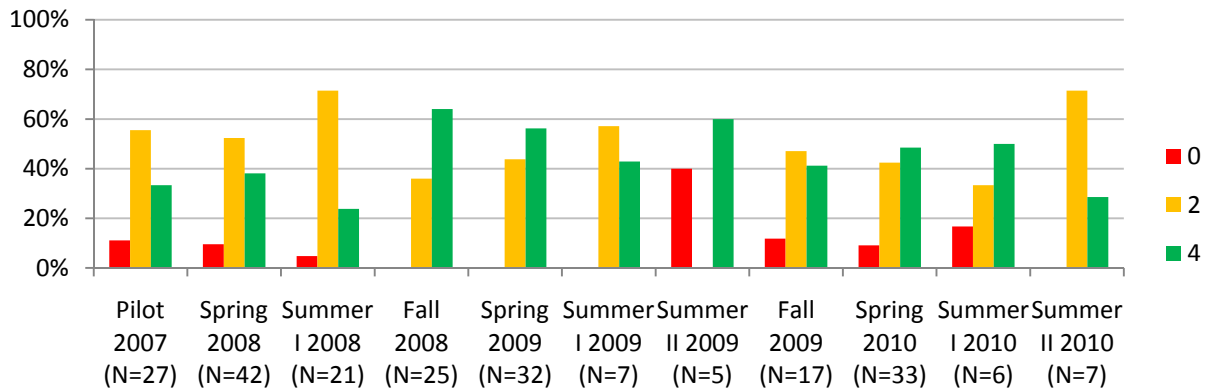
## Delivery



## Mechanics



## Organization



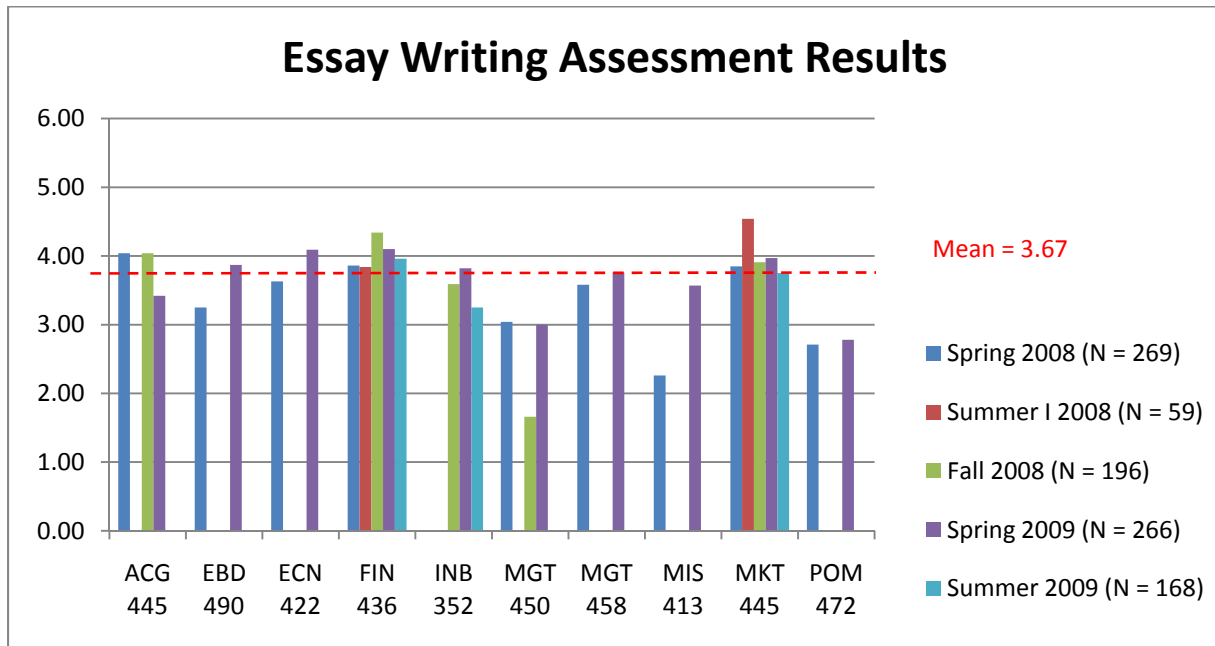
### Actions Taken:

The management faculty met, reviewed data and concluded: Students rate leadership and teamwork with higher performance—professors have rated integration and oral communication performance as mid-range. The Department considered changes 1) standardize peer evaluation (tied to grades) to show differentiation of student performance, 2) considered curricular or pedagogical improvements: 1 hour strategy lab (for integration)—long-term solution or 1 hours class along with 455 (to run simulation and collect rubric data from a captive audience)

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### Written Communication Assessments August 25, 2009, Update

Students take an online essay writing assessment called ETS Criterion during their capstone classes. Fall 2009 data is in the process of being analyzed and will be updated in January 2010.



### Action Taken:

Based on this analysis the AOL committee referred the writing assessment results to the Curriculum Committee. The suggestion was to consider forming a writing committee to evaluate writing assessment outcomes and potential need for improving student learning in this area. The Curriculum Committee requested volunteers from the faculty to serve as an ad hoc writing committee. The committee was formed in early October and tasked with reporting results before the Thanksgiving break. The writing review committee submitted its report to the Curriculum in December 1, 2009.

## **Notes from Writing Committee:**

The Assurance of Learning Writing Initiative Committee was formed to review the procedures and outcomes of the CSB writing assessment process. Under the current procedure, students write a timed essay that is scored by an automated online evaluation system, and receive a holistic score as well as sub-scores for grammar, usage, mechanics and style.

To perform its review, the committee analyzed the scores of 823 students who completed the assessment between spring 2008 and fall 2009. The committee also reviewed responses from eleven faculty proctors who answered a brief set of questions on how they administered the assessment.

On the surface, the average assessment scores suggest a moderately high level of student writing performance. However, an in-depth analysis of the data and a careful review of the comments made by faculty proctors indicate these results must be viewed with caution. The process by which the assessment was administered varied dramatically from instructor to instructor, resulting in uncertainty about the reliability of the data. Limitations of the computerized evaluation system created further doubts about whether accurate conclusions can be drawn from the data.

In light of these shortcomings, the committee made the following recommendations to improve the assessment process:

- 1: Standardize the assessment procedure.
- 2: Add a human evaluator.
- 3: Create incentives for high performance.
- 4: Develop an intrinsically interesting essay prompt.

A fifth recommendation originated from the committee's discussions on how writing might be improved in the CSB:

- 5: Include systematic writing instruction as part of the CSB curriculum.

In making this general recommendation, the committee emphasized that specific suggestions for how to implement writing instruction into the curriculum are premature because they require first an accurate assessment of students' existing skills. In light of this constraint, the committee's discussions raised the possibilities that students may need to develop or refresh their skills, and that frequent feedback and increased opportunities to practice might improve their writing. Thus, the committee offered the following ideas to promote future discussions on how writing instruction might take form once an appropriate diagnosis of current skill levels is conducted.

### Developing and Refreshing Skills

One of the most commonly suggested ways to improve student writing is to add a business communications course to the CSB core. The committee recognizes that developing and offering such a course would require substantial resources – ones that appear unavailable, at least in the foreseeable future. However, teaching writing skills is not an all-or-nothing proposition, and there is no reason to wait until a business communications course is a viable option to begin. Other possible approaches the committee discussed include:

- Add a one-credit writing skills lab to the existing CSB writing intensive courses.
- Teach core writing skills modules in one or more sessions of the CSB writing intensive courses, by the instructor or by a guest.
- Develop a required online writing skills course, or adopt an existing course.
- Promote self-study by requiring a minimum score on a standardized writing exam (e.g., a test similar to the GMAT verbal section) prior to admission to the CSB.
- Encourage passive learning by posting grammar questions/answers and “tips of the day” on the hallway monitors.

### Providing Frequent Feedback and Increasing Opportunities for Practice

Providing feedback and subsequent opportunities for practice are essential steps to improve performance. Below are a few, among many, ideas the committee discussed for how to increase feedback and opportunities for practice:

- Assign more short writing assignments rather than one long assignment.
- Require first drafts and subsequent revisions.
- Develop a writing scoring rubric to simplify grading. Potentially, a CSB-wide scoring rubric could be developed that includes the most common errors in student writing. A companion document could be distributed to students.
- Utilize qualified CSB graduate students (or graduate students outside CSB) to assist with scoring grammar, usage and mechanics in written assignments. The instructor could still grade for content.
- Establish a CSB writing lab.

The committee expressed its encouragement at the prospect of improving student writing in the CSB. The clearest next step is to address the shortcomings of the current writing assessment process. While that occurs, the committee urged continued discussion of other key issues related to improving student writing. Based on this analysis the AOL committee referred the writing assessment results to the Curriculum Committee. The suggestion was to consider forming a writing committee to evaluate writing assessment outcomes and potential need for improving student learning in this area. The Curriculum Committee requested volunteers from the faculty to serve as an ad hoc writing committee. The committee was formed in early October and tasked with reporting results before the Thanksgiving break. The writing review committee submitted its report to the Curriculum in December 1, 2009. This report was referred back to the curriculum committee to act on recommendations in January 2010.

## **January 11, 2010 Minutes From Curriculum Committee**

**Members present:** Becky Sawyer, Pete Schuhmann, Tom Janicki, Becky Porterfield, Katie Hartman, & Steve Harper (Chairman). Non-voting members present: Colleen Kolb and George Schell.

**Also attending:** Dave Glew – Chairman of the AOL Writing Analysis Committee

Becky Porterfield – Director of CSB’s AOL activities. (Becky is a member of the Curriculum Committee on matters related to the International Business program in CSB). She was invited to the meeting so she could ask questions, share her thoughts about the report, and be part of the discussion about how to improve writing skills.

### **Motions Approved:**

1. The AOL writing assessment be administered during class time. The instructor will check to see which lab is available for the assessment.
2. The AOL writing assessment be administered by a member of the AOL committee or the CSB writing committee.
3. No incentives will be provided for taking the exam or scoring well. The assessment is considered to be a CSB requirement to be done by students in that class.
4. A procedure be developed so a sample of the students’ writing will be analyzed by two or more trained reviewers to determine the level of proficiency and possible areas of weakness.
5. All CSB faculty be surveyed to identify areas where students have writing deficiencies.
6. The ad hoc writing committee be asked to continue for the foreseeable future to advise the curriculum committee. Dave Glew agreed to continue serving as the Chairman. He is welcome to invite people to fill in for faculty who served on the committee and want to rotate off the committee.

It is understood that numerous logistical issues still need to be resolved. Many of the issues will be addressed by the CSB AOL office.

### **Notes from the AOL Committee 1/15/10:**

The AOL committee reviewed the recommendations from the curriculum and voted to accept all recommendations. Because this is an AOL process change and requires substantial faculty commitment, the recommendations will move to the Strategy Committee.