

- Assess, analyze, and evaluate the unique health and cultural concerns and needs of a diverse population
  - ADMN 645 Transcultural Populations in Health Care Promotion Planning
    - Research Paper with full citations and references
- Assess, analyze, and evaluate disease prevention strategies and limiting the effects of epidemic outbreaks
  - ADMN 647 Epidemiology and Disease Prevention
    - Analysis Proposal and Research Paper with full citations and references
- Explore, assess, and analyze the unique issues that effect women's health
  - ADMN 648 Current Issues in Women's Health
    - Research Paper with full citations and references
- Plan, implement, and evaluate health promotion programs that are effective and inclusive
  - ADMN 649 Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Health Promotion Programs
    - Group Analysis and Proposal Project and Final Exam

### **Data**

To measure the student's successful expression of the competencies and the learning outcomes I chose to view the program as a wholistic entity and to measure the student's progress toward competency and learning outcome attainment across the arc of the degree program experience. I chose to assess the two *Gateway* courses in the MSA program, which are taken consecutively, a section of the research course, one concentration course, and two sections of the capstone course. The two sections of the Capstone Project are intended as a cross check to assess the accuracy of this assessment program. Each of the courses featured a research paper and some featured a group case study. To assess the assignments I used a graduate level rubric for academic papers and for academic presentations. See the appendices for these documents. The courses are generally taken in the following order as follows:

- ADMN 603 Excellence in Managing Contemporary Organizations, Spring 2011
- ADMN 601 Excellence in Leadership: Theory and Practice, Fall 2010
- ADMN 609 Introduction to Research Design and Methods (Now numbered INT 601 in the course catalogue), Fall 2009
- ADMN 665 Organizational Strategy, Fall 2010
- ADMN 699 Capstone Project, Spring 2010

- ADMN 699 Capstone Project, Fall 2010

**Academic Paper Rubric:** The 100 point rubric includes the categories: Format, Style and Grammar, References and Citations, and Critical Thinking and Reasoning. Format addresses the proper use of American Psychological Association (APA) publishing manual, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition and SPS publishing style for twenty points. Style and Grammar addresses good academic writing habits for twenty points. References and Citations addresses the proper supporting of concepts and arguments with APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition citations and references for twenty points. Finally, Critical Thinking and Reasoning covers the universal academic standards and how well the academic argument is presented and supported for forty points.

**Academic Presentation Rubric:** The 100 point rubric includes the categories: Format, Content Knowledge and Delivery, and Critical Thinking and Reasoning. Format addresses the proper use of power point slides to convey the presentation topic and message for thirty points. Content Knowledge and Delivery addresses how well the student(s) understand the presentation topic and message and how well they are able to convey the topic and message for thirty points. Finally, Critical Thinking and Reasoning covers the universal academic standards and how well the academic argument is presented and supported for forty points.

For all assignments I used the following guidelines for assessing the results into three categories: those that earned an A in this assessment, those that earned a B in this assessment, and those that earned a B minus or less. Papers graded A earned 94% or more and require limited improvement. Papers graded B earned 84% or more and require moderate improvements. Papers graded B minus or below earned less than 84% (B- or less) do not meet good academic standing and require significant improvements. Papers earning 73% or less are considered as failing. The grading system is consistent with the SPS graduate policy on *Good Academic Standing*.

## **Results**

**ADMN 603 Excellence in Managing Contemporary Organizations, Spring 2011:** in this section it is evident that students engaging in their first graduate level course in the MSA degree program are not fully prepared to achieve graduate level writing assignment expectations. While forty percent passed the final writing assignment, the earlier assignments in this course should have better prepared them for this assignment.

Table 1.

*ADMN 603 Academic Paper Results*

Student	Format	Style & Grammar	References & Citations	Critical Thinking & Reasoning	Total Score
Student 1	13	13	10	25	61
Student 2	13	17	15	30	75
Student 3	15	18	17	30	80
Student 4	17	20	17	35	89
Student 5	15	20	18	38	91

Table 2.

*ADMN 603 Academic Paper Grading Analysis*

A - Require limited improvement	0	0.00%
B - Require moderate improvement	2	40.00%
C - Do not meet good academic standing	3	60.00%

**ADMN 601 Excellence in Leadership: Theory and Practice, Fall 2010:** in this section it is evident that students engaging in their second graduate level course in the MSA degree program are showing improvement in achieving graduate level writing assignment expectations. While sixty percent passed the final writing assignment, the earlier course assignments should have better prepared them for this assignment.

Table 3.

*ADMN 601 Academic Paper Results*

Student	Format	Style & Grammar	References & Citations	Critical Thinking & Reasoning	Total Score
Student 1	17	20	12	30	79
Student 2	20	20	18	38	96
Student 3	15	17	15	37	84
Student 4	10	17	12	30	69
Student 5	17	18	17	40	92

Table 4.

*ADMN 601 Academic Paper Grading Analysis*

<b>A - Require limited improvement</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40.00%</b>
<b>B - Require moderate improvement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20.00%</b>
<b>C - Do not meet good academic standing</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40.00%</b>

**ADMN 609 Introduction to Research Design and Methods (Now INT 601 in the Academic Catalogue), Fall 2009:** This course is generally taken at the midpoint of the degree program, between eighteen and twenty-four credit hours. Due to the large amount of new information and the difficult nature of the concepts learned students often express difficulty with this course. Due to the new information and difficult concepts introduced in this course it is offered in the full 16 week semester format. This is exhibited in the data as a return to the sixty percent passing rate. While it is common for students to struggle with new materials and concepts they should rebound to their original achievement levels within the course.

Table 5.

*ADMN 609 Academic Paper Results*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Style &amp; Grammar</b>	<b>References &amp; Citations</b>	<b>Critical Thinking &amp; Reasoning</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
<b>Student 1</b>	17	19	18	37	<b>89</b>
<b>Student 2</b>	12	17	17	36	<b>82</b>
<b>Student 3</b>	15	17	15	37	<b>84</b>
<b>Student 4</b>	15	19	10	32	<b>76</b>
<b>Student 5</b>	18	19	20	39	<b>96</b>
<b>Student 6</b>	16	19	12	36	<b>83</b>
<b>Student 7</b>	18	19	17	37	<b>90</b>
<b>Student 8</b>	17	18	12	32	<b>79</b>
<b>Student 9</b>	16	19	17	37	<b>89</b>
<b>Student 10</b>	18	20	20	38	<b>96</b>

Table 6.

*ADMN 609 Academic Paper Grading Analysis*

<b>Require limited improvement</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20.00%</b>
<b>Require moderate improvement</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40.00%</b>
<b>Do not meet good academic standing</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40.00%</b>

**ADMN 665 Organizational Strategy, Fall 2010:** This course requires the students to work in teams throughout the course on a significant case study analysis with a group paper and a group presentation. Group work for students can be either very difficult or very rewarding. This is a course which students generally enroll in between the midpoint and the completion of their degree program. Often several of the students are enrolled in either the research course or the capstone project concurrently with this course. This requires a great deal of discipline on their parts, however is also enables them to take advantage of offering guidance to students who are not as far along in their degree program. The grading results below show that the students are achieving graduate level assignment expectations with a 100 percent success rate.

Table 7.

*ADMN 665 Academic Paper Results*

Student	Format	Style & Grammar	References & Citations	Critical Thinking & Reasoning	Total Score
<b>Team 1 Paper</b>	19	19	19	38	<b>95</b>
<b>Team 2 Paper</b>	19	19	16	38	<b>92</b>
<b>Team 3 Paper</b>	17	20	18	39	<b>94</b>

Table 8.

*ADMN 665 Academic Presentation Results*

	Format	Content Knowledge & Delivery	Critical Thinking & Reasoning	Total
<b>Team 1 Presentation</b>	30	30	35	<b>95</b>
<b>Team 2 Presentation</b>	30	30	35	<b>95</b>
<b>Team 3 Presentation</b>	29	30	39	<b>98</b>

Table 9.

*ADMN 665 Academic Grading Totals*

	Team Totals	Total Possible Points	Percent Earned
<b>Team 1 Total</b>	190	200	<b>95.00%</b>
<b>Team 2 Total</b>	187	200	<b>93.50%</b>
<b>Team 3 Total</b>	192	200	<b>96.00%</b>

Table 10.

*ADMN 665 Academic Paper Grading Analysis*

<b>A - Require limited improvement</b>	2	<b>66.67%</b>
<b>B - Require moderate improvement</b>	1	<b>33.33%</b>
<b>C - Do not meet good academic standing</b>	0	<b>0.00%</b>

**ADMN 699 Capstone Project, Spring 2010 and Fall 2010:** the capstone project course is demanding and difficult in that students perform literature surveys, determine research topics, reduce the topic to a research problem, then determine a method of inquiry to investigate the research problem. This requires discipline and determination to ensure the research methodology meets standards of rigor and the resulting data meets validity tests. This is often the most complex academic deliverable the student has accomplished. It is a watershed moment in their academic progress.

In this assessment of the Spring 2010 Capstone Project seventy percent of the students were graded with A papers. One student earned a B grade and two students did not meet good academic standing. The students who did not meet the expectations of good academic standing in this assessment scored low in Formatting, References and Citations, and Critical Thinking and Reasoning. Suggesting that they did not engage the assignment at their full potential. The presence of the three lower grades show that the instructor applied rigor in accepting completed work of high quality. For this assessment of the Fall 2010 Capstone Project nearly sixty percent of the students earned A grades. Just over forty percent of the students earned B grades, and no students were below good academic standing. This again shows the instructor applied rigor in accepting completed work of a high quality.

Table 11.

*ADMN 699, Spring 2010 Academic Paper Results*

Student	Format	Style & Grammar	References & Citations	Critical Thinking & Reasoning	Total Score
Student 1	19	20	20	38	97
Student 2	18	18	20	38	94
Student 3	18	18	20	38	94
Student 4	18	19	20	38	95
Student 5	17	20	20	38	95
Student 6	81	20	18	38	94
Student 7	12	20	15	32	79
Student 8	17	18	18	38	91
Student 9	17	19	20	38	94
Student 10	15	17	17	34	83

Table 12.

*ADMN 699, Spring 2010 Academic Grading Analysis*

A - Require limited improvement	7	70.00%
B - Require moderate improvement	1	10.00%
C - Do not meet good academic standing	2	20.00%

Table 13.

*ADMN 699, Fall 2010 Academic Paper Results*

Student	Format	Style & Grammar	References & Citations	Critical Thinking & Reasoning	Total Score
Student 1	15	19	18	38	90
Student 2	14	19	18	38	89
Student 3	19	19	19	38	95
Student 4	16	19	18	38	91
Student 5	18	20	19	38	95
Student 6	19	20	19	38	96
Student 7	17	18	17	36	88

Table 14.

*ADMN 699, Fall 2010 Academic Grading Analysis*

<b>A - Require limited improvement</b>	4	<b>57.14%</b>
<b>B - Require moderate improvement</b>	3	<b>42.86%</b>
<b>C - Do not meet good academic standing</b>	0	<b>0.00%</b>

**Discussion**

The program level assessment of the Master's of Science Administration (MSA) degree program reveals and expected progress in the student's ability to improve and to achieve graduate level expectations of course assignments. Twenty percent of those students who did not meet expectations improved to a B grade or better in their second gateway course. Forty percent of the students improved to an A grade in their second gateway course. While this progression is expected the analysis of the *Gateway* courses, ADMN 603 and ADMN 601, shows that the students, however capable their potential might be, are in general underprepared for these graduate level expectations of completed assignments. These courses use a tactic of progressive writing assignments. For example, the students might write one significant paper in a series of three drafts that expect a significant increase in the quality of the content and the application of the APA 6<sup>th</sup> and SPS publishing style. In other instances the student's might be required to complete two or three papers with a significant increase in the quality of the content and the application of the APA 6<sup>th</sup> and SPS publishing style. This tactic appears to have a positive effect. However the students might benefit from a refresher in general good writing practices and academic writing in specific.

Table 15.

*Gateway Course Progression*

	<b>ADMN 603</b>	<b>ADMN 601</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>A - Require limited improvement</b>	0.00%	40.00%	<b>40.00%</b>
<b>B - Require moderate improvement</b>	40.00%	20.00%	<b>-20.00%</b>
<b>C - Do not meet good academic standing</b>	60.00%	40.00%	<b>20.00%</b>

A progression similar to that of the gateway courses is seen in the progression exhibited in this analysis of the ADMN 609 (INT 601) research course and the ADMN 699 capstone courses. The significant increase (44.71%) in the a graded papers with the significant decreases in the B graded (-16.47%) and the graded below good academic standing (-28.24) papers indicates the students are progressing in their ability to make use of the concepts and the practices of rigorous research and valid results to elicit a deeper



understanding of the data and to synthesize that understanding into new knowledge connections and evaluate the usefulness of their conclusions and recommendations.

Table 16.

*Research to Capstone Progression*

	ADMN 609	Combined ADMN 699	Percent Change
<b>A - Require limited improvement</b>	20.00%	64.71%	<b>44.71</b>
<b>B - Require moderate improvement</b>	40.00%	23.53%	<b>-16.47</b>
<b>C - Do not meet good academic standing</b>	40.00%	11.76%	<b>-28.24%</b>

The assessment of the ADMN 665 course shows a marked difference between itself and the other courses assessed here. With two-thirds of the students earning an A grade and no students earning a grade below academic good standing there is cause to examine this course further. There are some significant differences in this course's purpose and its delivery. This course is in the MSA concentration for Organizational Development. Anecdotally, students in the MSA program are often more excited, engaged, and determined to get the most they can from the course. This can make a significant difference in their ability to comprehend the course material and content, and the effort they put forth in the completion of course assignments. MSA students who are at the midpoint and beyond have had several group assignments and are well prepared to manage the dynamic interactions incumbent in high pressure group projects and assignments. New students and outliers are quickly brought to the task and to understand their responsibilities. Group project members at this stage of the degree program understand the importance of not letting details drop and will assist other students on their team more willingly.

Anecdotally, several of the faculty, full time and adjunct, have mentioned that they have difficulty engaging the students in quantitative or statistical material as would be required of them in their professional lives. Much the course time is lost to overcoming the desire to avoid, or the fear of numerical information. This often leads to students who have a less than complete understanding of the course materials and learning outcomes and who are not prepared for the quantitative methodology section of the INT 601 Introduction to Research Design and Methods course. Some faculty have worked on this issue one on one with individual students or with courses as a whole and have seen some positive response to qualitative analysis. Several are delivering qualitative capstone projects in this program this semester.

## Conclusions

It is apparent after this assessment and the data analysis that students are less prepared to meet graduate level course assignment expectations that we would prefer. However the students are capable of improving during their tenure in the MSA degree program. Many of the students chosen at random from the courses in this assessment were assessed multiple times, including the research to capstone project progression. I was impressed with the growth in ability and confidence I found in their work.

Overall the MSA degree program is delivering on its promise of facilitating students in achieving and expressing the degree objectives and the learning outcomes.

## Recommendations

With regard to the findings in the data analysis and the discussion there are some specific recommendations that would assist the students in the MSA degree program. Many of these require minor adjustments to the degree program.

- Offer a graduate level writing course that focuses on both good writing practices and academic writing style.
  - The course might be offered in a short term for zero credits on a pass no pass or as an audited workshop.
  - This course would be available prior to a student's first semester in the degree program or concurrently in the first semester.
  - This course might also include the use of APA 6<sup>th</sup> and SPS publishing styles and practical instruction and hands on experience in how to avoid plagiarism.
- There is an art to writing prosaically while conveying and intricate academic argument supported with disparate information couched in stilted and awkward language at its source. To assist in developing the skills required for quality academic writing Trinity might offer more writing resources on campus for students enrolled in the graduate level degree programs.
  - The Writing Center in Trinity's Academic Services Center is understandably focused on the undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences whose needs are more focused on grammar and style, but have little focus on academic writing.
- Develop rubrics appropriate for *Case Study Analysis*, *Group or Team Work*, and extend the Academic Paper Rubric to include *Research Methodology*. The Academic Paper and Presentation Rubrics might also benefit from dividing the *Critical Thinking* and the *Reasoning* section.