

# AACSB Assurance of Learning (AoL) Report & Recommendations

Fogelman College of Business & Economics

PhD Program

Reporting Cycle (2018-19)

## Executive Summary (PhD 2018-19 Report)

### PhD Committee:

Dan Sherrell (MKTG, chair), Tom McInish (FIR), Joon Lee (ECON), Ted Lee (BIT), Kristen Jones (MGMT), Zabi Rezae (ACCT), Chuck Pierce (Dean's Office), Ashley Connolly (Graduate Programs), Sandy Schaeffer (AoL, Dean's Office)

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### Program Notes:

Students successfully completing the PhD program in the Fogelman College have demonstrated exceptional knowledge and skills in their area of interest and to prepare them for successful careers in academics, government, or industry.

Fogelman PhD graduates must:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of their areas of specialization through research, scholarly writing, and presentation at academic conferences.
- Show mastery of the analytical and methodological skills need to design and conduct original research in their areas of specialization.
- Function as effective teachers at the college-level.
- Communicate research findings clearly and effectively.

Links to resources used in assessing the PhD program:

- [PhD Learning Outcomes](#)
  - [PhD Assessment Rubric](#)
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### Assessment Methodology:

Data was collected for all graduating PhD candidates over the period of Fall 2016 thru Spring 2018 using input from their committee chair in coordination with other committee members to assess skills across all of the PhD LOs. Individual students were scored on all learning outcomes using a 3-point scale of 1=Fair, 2=Good, 3=Exceptional. The assessment committee agreed that any learning outcome with a non-zero score at the Fair (1) level merited attention.

Faculty submitting assessment data:

- Kemme, McInish, Okunade, Stafford, Hussey, Kedia, Smith, Fabian, Sherrell, Jain, Allen, Pierce

A total of 22 completed assessments including students from ECON (6), FIR (6), MKTG/SCMS (5), and MGMT (5) for this analysis.

**Summary of Findings:**

Overall, the assessed PhD students showed good or exemplary competence across the majority of the degree's learning outcomes. However, in the general area of journal publications and conference presentations a number of students fell in the "fair" (score=1) category and merited attention. This was the most significant finding (See: Goals 1, 2 & 3) where 27% of the students were not successful in publishing a paper and 9% were not successful in presenting at an academic conference. The committee focused its attention on addressing those two shortfalls. [See Appendix A for a full detailed review of the assessment outcomes for each Program Learning Goals (PLG) by Measured Learning Outcome (MLO) in the PhD program.]

**Recommendations for Improvement:**

1. PhD faculty should increase the frequency of "dry run" presentations by all PhD candidates.
2. Develop a more structured rubric for assessing student presentations to provide more constructive feedback for improvement.
3. Increase financial support for PhD students to attend academic conferences.

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**Implementation and Actions on Current (2018-19) Recommendations:**

To ensure the committee's recommendations are implemented and reassessed for impact, the PhD AoL committee met in early AY 2019 and identified the following steps for each recommended program improvement:

**Recommendation:** Increase frequency of "dry run" presentations by all PhD candidates:

Action 1: All departments will increase the frequency of their PhD students as presenters in departmental research forums and other internal discipline-specific events.

Action 2: The Finance Department will continue to encourage PhD candidates to revise and resubmit before their final dissertation presentation.

Action 3: Explore expanding to other disciplines what Management does through its MMRC (Midsouth Management Regional Council) which includes regional academic conference presentation opportunities for graduate students.

**Recommendation:** More structured rubric & feedback on student presentations:

Action 1: PhD faculty will explore participating in a college-wide project to develop a structured framework for teaching and assessing communication skills. A specific version of this framework will be adapted to the needs of doctoral-level students.

**Recommendation:** Increase financial support for PhD candidates to academic conferences:

Action 1: All departments with PhD candidates will work to ensure adequate funds are available for graduate students to participate in at least one academic conference as a presenter.

Action 2: Explore professional development for FCBE PhD faculty to improve their overall skills at preparing our doctoral students for the job market. This might occur in the form of outside consultant-led workshops each Fall and funded through the Dean's office.

**How to Verify:** Tracking of these actions can be accomplished through ongoing coordination and communication with PhD dissertation faculty and the program administration offices. The tracking/verification data elements for each recommendation can be added to the existing PhD candidate assessment instrument on Qualtrics.

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**Previous AoL Review and Notes:**

The most recent previous AoL review of the PhD program was completed in AY 2014. A full copy of that report and its recommendations can be viewed here: [PhD 2014 AoL Report](#)

The 2018-19 committee reviewed and discussed the previous 2014 report's findings and recommendations for follow-up as needed. [See Appendix B for notes and details of the 2014 AoL discussion and recommended actions.]

The 2014 findings discussed by the 2018-19 committee:

1. Time to Graduation
2. Ensuring follow-through on committee recommendations
3. Clean-up/rewording of Phd program goals and learning objectives to remove redundancies
4. Experience teaching college-level courses by all PhD students
5. Supporting PhD student attendance at academic conferences

## Appendix A: FCBE PhD AoL, Assessment Results by Goal/Objective (Fall 2018)

Years/Semesters: **Fall 2016 thru Spring 2018**

Degrees Assessed: ECON (6), FIR (6), MKTG/SCMS (5), MGMT (5) [TOTAL=22]

### **GOAL #1: STUDENT DEMONSTRATED DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OR HER AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:**

#### ***Obj1- Completed a research paper as part of student's coursework requirements***

- 1 - Paper did not contain required components and/or did not exhibit expected quality
- 2 - Paper met requirements and exhibited adequate quality
- 3 - Paper exceeded all requirements; makes a contribution to knowledge on topic

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	8	36%
3	14	64%

#### ***Obj2 - Completed questions on theoretical topics from comprehensive exam***

- 1 - Question was not fully addressed, weak knowledge of topic exhibited, or did not exhibit expected quality
- 2 - Adequate knowledge of topic exhibited and demonstrated adequate quality
- 3 - Thorough answer to question; Good knowledge of topic exhibited

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	10	45%
3	12	55%

#### ***Obj3 - Published a manuscript in peer-reviewed journal***

- 1 - Manuscript started but not submitted
- 2 - Manuscript accepted in a non-peer reviewed journal or "B" or "C" level journal
- 3 - Manuscript revision invited or acceptance given for publication in an "A" level journal

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	6	27%
2	5	23%
3	11	50%

**Obj4 - Presented a paper at academic conference**

- 1 - Manuscript started but not submitted
- 2 - Manuscript accepted for presentation at a local, state, or regional academic conference
- 3 - Manuscript accepted for presentation at a national or international academic conference

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	2	9%
2	6	27%
3	14	64%

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**GOAL #2: STUDENT MASTERED ANALYTICAL/METHODOLOGICAL SKILLS NEEDED TO EVALUATE AND CONDUCT RESEARCH IN HIS OR HER AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**
**Obj1- Completed analytical/methodological questions from student's comprehensive exams**

- 1 - Question was not fully addressed, weak knowledge of topic exhibited, or did not exhibited expected quality
- 2 - Adequate knowledge of topic exhibited and demonstrated adequate quality
- 3 - Thorough answer to question; Good knowledge of topic exhibited

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	10	45%
3	12	55%

**Obj2 - Published a manuscript in peer-reviewed journal**

- 1 - Manuscript started but not submitted
- 2 - Manuscript accepted in a non-peer reviewed journal or "B" or "C" level journal
- 3 - Manuscript revision invited or accepted given for publication in an "A" level journal

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	8	36%
2	4	18%
3	10	46%

**Obj3 - Presented a paper at academic conference**

- 1 - Manuscript was started but not submitted
- 2 - Manuscript accepted for presentation at a local, state, or regional academic conference
- 3 - Manuscript accepted for presentation at a national or international academic conference

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	3	14%
2	6	27%
3	13	59%

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**GOAL #3: STUDENT DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO DESIGN AND CONDUCT ORIGINAL RESEARCH IN HIS OR HER CHOSEN FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION**

***Obj1 - Presented a paper in research seminar to faculty***

- 1 - Research poorly conducted; weak analysis; unorganized presentation; and/or did not exhibit expected quality
- 2 - Adequate research study; exhibited adequate quality
- 3 - Good research study; Presentation well-organized

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	6	27%
3	16	73%

***Obj2 - Published a manuscript in peer-reviewed journal***

- 1 - Manuscript started but not submitted
- 2 - Manuscript accepted in a non-peer reviewed journal or "B" or "C" level journal
- 3 - Manuscript revision invited or acceptance given for publication in an "A" level journal

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	8	36%
2	4	18%
3	10	46%

***Obj3 - Presented paper at academic conference***

- 1 - Manuscript started but not submitted
- 2 - Manuscript accepted for presentation at a local, state, or regional academic conference
- 3 - Manuscript accepted for presentation at a national or international academic conference

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	2	9%
2	6	27%
3	14	64%

**GOAL #4: STUDENT IS ABLE TO TEACH COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES IN HIS OR HER AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION*****Obj1 - Completed instruction of assigned college course or classes within course***

- 1 - Problems in course administration; poor instructional style; student interaction difficulties
- 2 - Adequate course organization; some difficulties in course administration
- 3 - Good course administration; favorable student comments

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	3	14%
3	19	86%

***Obj2 - Assess student teaching evaluations for each course taught by the student. Compare to teaching evaluations for each course taught by a FCBE PhD student.***

- 1 - Student teaching evaluations below FCBE average for course
- 2 - Student teaching evaluations met FCBE average for course
- 3 - Student teaching evaluations exceeded FCBE average for course

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	11	50%
3	11	50%

**GOAL #5: STUDENT IS ABLE TO COMMUNICATE THE RESULTS OF HIS OR HER RESEARCH IN A CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE MANNER*****Obj1 - Evaluate written and oral presentations from student's coursework***

- 1 - Poorly organized presentation; poor oral presentation - confused and ineffective
- 2 - Adequate presentation; good organization
- 3 - Excellent organization of material; effective presentation

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	9	41%
3	13	59%



**Obj2 - Evaluate oral presentation in research seminar**

- 1 - Poorly organized presentation; poor oral presentation - confused and ineffective
- 2 - Adequate presentation; good organization
- 3 - Excellent organization of material; effective presentation

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	10	45%
3	12	55%

**Obj3 - Evaluate written presentations given in comprehensive exams**

- 1 - Poor presentation; confused and unprepared
- 2 - Adequate presentation; good preparation
- 3 - Excellent presentation; very good preparation

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	10	45%
3	12	55%

**Obj4 - Evaluation oral presentations given in comprehensive exams**

- 1 - Poorly organized presentation; poor oral presentation - confused and ineffective
- 2 - Adequate presentation; good organization
- 3 - Excellent organization or material; effective presentation

Scored Level	Cnt @ Score	Pct (%)
1	0	0%
2	10	45%
3	12	55%

## Appendix B

### Follow-up on Recommendations from Previous CTL (2014)

#### **Discussion Topic #1: Time to Graduation**

Recommended we consider time-to-graduation as an additional indicator of program quality

Notes & follow-up:

- Consider establishing 7 years as part of the benchmark. Anything beyond the 7 year cutoff would be considered a “problem” meriting corrective action.
- The committee did not initially feel it had enough data to suggest a specific benchmark (e.g., 90% graduating in 7 years or less) and suggested we do a lookback analysis of the 22 students assessed in the current CTL cycle along with a snapshot of all the current PhD students across the college. (See results of this snapshot in next bullet.)
- ***Snapshot results of the 22 in this CTL: 90% (18/20) of full-time students graduated in 7 years or less and 65% (13/20) graduated in 6 years or less. [PERHAPS GO WITH A 90% IN 7 YRS BENCHMARK?]***
- Recommended we use only full-time students in this analysis (exclude part-time).

#### **Discussion Topic #2: Ensuring Follow-Through on CTL Recommendations**

Discussed methods to ensure the college is able to follow-through on recommendations to the PhD program that come from the AoL process.

Notes & follow-up:

- The recommendation was to have Sandy (or the current AoL coordinator) to begin participating in the PhD Subcouncil Meetings with an agenda item related to implementation of CTL program recommendations. This should begin as soon as is feasible.

#### **Discussion Topics #3: Cleanup/rewording of PhD Program Goals & Objectives to remove redundancies.**

Notes & Follow-up:

- Both Dan Sherrell and Ashley Connolly reported that this had been implemented since the last CTL cycle in 2014 and reflected in the new online assessment data collection process with Qualtrics and used to collect this CTL’s (2018) data.

#### **Discussion Topic #4: Student ability to teach college-level courses. (Goal 4, 2014 recommendations)**

Discussion about ensuring that all students completing the PhD program have an opportunity to independently teach at the college-level course before graduating. While the 2014 CTL report did not identify this as an area of deficiency (see: recommendation #14 on 2014 report), the committee wanted

to be sure we continued to support this as a core component of our students' learning experiences in the FCBE PhD program.

Notes & Follow-up:

- Students must be a full faculty (assigned via Banner), not as a TA or co-instructor in order to fulfill this learning outcome.
- Classes taught can be either classroom-based or fully-online to meet this requirement.
- Exceptions may need to be made for non-funded PhD students (e.g., federally funded). In those cases, it may require either funding for an adjunct contract or allow substitution of similar experiences (co-instructor or GTA).
- Some additional discussion regarding the SETE scores as a basis for assessing the quality of their teaching. Is it a valid measurement or should something different be developed?

**Discussion Topic #5: (2014 Results, Goal 5) Supporting PhD students' attendance at academic conferences.**

There was a recommendation to ensure that PhD students are able to attend and present at national conferences during their studies. It was not clear from the discussion if this is a funding need or general support in terms of preparation and selection.

Notes & Follow-up:

- Regarding oral presentation and communication skills, there was a recommendation to ensure all students conduct a pre-conference "dry run" locally with a structured assessment rubric to help with consistency of feedback. (See 2018-19 Report & Recommendations.)
- On the funding matter, no specific recommendations were made, but it may be that this can be tied into specific recommendations for the 2018 analysis regarding conferences and papers. (See below.)