Department: Accounting

Program(s): BSBA Majoring in Accounting

Date: May 31, 2012

Response to Questions:

1a. Does the program have clear student learning outcomes?

Department Mission
The Mission of the Accounting Department is to provide our students with an undergraduate program of study which emphasizes the competencies and technical skills needed for entry into the accounting profession and for career advancement. Our teaching is enhanced by faculty research and service.

Program Rationale or Mission
Students that graduate from the Accounting program at CCSU should possess the skills and competencies necessary for entry into and advancement in the accounting profession.

We have identified four broad learning outcomes that we believe demonstrate the skills and competencies required in the accounting profession.

1. **Determine and apply the appropriate accounting standard(s) for a given set of circumstances.**
   The ability to prepare accounting reports that apply the appropriate accounting concepts and standards and properly account for the underlying business events or circumstance. This outcome is focused on financial accounting and tax accounting, though identifying and using appropriate techniques is also important for managerial accounting.

2. **Evaluate an accounting system for control strengths and weaknesses.**
   The ability to evaluate accounting reports for fair presentation of financial position and operating results and to evaluate the control strengths and weaknesses of accounting systems used to prepare the financial reports. This outcome is focused primarily on accounting information systems and auditing.

3. **Solve complex (financial and managerial) accounting problems.**
   The ability to solve complex accounting problems, including the analysis and use of financial accounting information to support financing and investing decisions, the use of managerial accounting information to support business decisions, the use of tax reporting requirements and consequences to support business decisions, and determining how to design accounting information systems or improve existing systems.

4. **Transform from a student to an accounting professional (i.e. professionalism and ethical conduct).**
   An understanding of the ethical and legal requirements of the profession, and a demonstrated willingness to adhere to the high level of moral and ethical conduct expected by the profession.

The above are the four learning outcomes we use in our assurance of learning and continuous improvement efforts. In our assurance of learning reporting, the learning outcomes are described much
more briefly as highlighted in bold above and more in relation to the assignments we have selected to
assess each objective. We would like to change the descriptions of our learning outcomes in our
assurance of learning reporting to more clearly reflect our intended outcomes, but our current focus has
been on improving data gathering and use of the data rather than clarifying labels we innately
understand as reflecting broader outcomes.

An understanding of accounting terminology, principles, and techniques are a necessary
prerequisite to gaining the abilities we have identified above. In addition certain core competencies are
necessary for students to successfully demonstrate these abilities: critical thinking, quantitative analysis
and analytical reasoning (these could be considered dimensions of critical thinking), communication
skills (written and oral), and proficiency with the use of technology, especially use of spreadsheets and
online or database information searches.

Each of our courses lists course objectives. A mapping of these objectives of all of our required
accounting courses into our four learning outcomes is presented in Appendix A: Exhibit 1. Some of the
course objectives refer to the prerequisite basic accounting knowledge that will be acquired in the
course as well as the application of that knowledge implied by our program learning objectives. The
course syllabi also make reference to knowledge and skills that will be developed or demonstrated in
the course, including core competencies mentioned above and sometimes also including reference to
basic technical accounting knowledge also included in the course objectives.

All Business majors regardless of discipline are expected to demonstrate:
1. A mastery of fundamental business knowledge within each discipline.
2. Critical thinking ability, an ability to evaluate, analyze and interpret information to solve
problems and make business decisions.
3. An awareness of ethical obligations and a willingness to act ethically, as well as a global
perspective. An awareness cultural differences and an appreciation of diversity.
4. Leadership skills, as well as an ability to work effectively in teams.
5. Communication skills. The ability to use written and oral skills to communicate effectively in a
business environment.
6. The ability to use technology to gather and analyze information, and an understanding of how
technology is used to solve business problems.

Accounting measures five learning outcomes under the mastery of business knowledge goal at
the introductory accounting level:

1. Apply business research skills.
2. Apply proper [financial] accounting standards and proper cost accounting concepts to solve
problems.
3. Interpret external financial statements.
4. Apply spreadsheet skills.
5. Solve problems using managerial models.

Accounting mastery learning outcome 1, applying business research skills, refers to the ability to
find and analyze financial accounting information available for publicly traded companies. It is also
related to BSBA goal 6, the ability to use technology to gather and analyze information. Accounting
mastery learning outcome 3, interpret external financial statements relates to financial statement
analysis, the ability to understand and interpret publicly available financial accounting information.
Accounting mastery learning outcomes 1 and 3 are assessed in AC 211, the introductory financial accounting class. Accounting mastery learning outcome 2, apply proper financial accounting standards and proper cost accounting concepts to solve problems is the ability to understand financial accounting principles and managerial accounting concepts and to apply those principles and concepts in solving business problems. Learning outcome 2 is related to our Major learning outcome 3 but it takes a user rather than a preparer perspective. Learning outcome 2 is assessed in both introductory financial and managerial accounting (AC 211 & AC 212). Accounting mastery learning outcome 4, applying spreadsheet skills, is also related to BSBA Goal 6, the ability to use technology to gather and analyze information. Accounting mastery learning outcome 5, solving problems using managerial models, is arguably a subset of learning outcome 2, apply proper financial accounting standards and proper cost accounting concepts to solve problems and our Major learning outcome 3, but it is measured and assessed separately in addition to the assessment of accounting mastery learning outcome 2. Accounting mastery learning outcomes 4 and 5 are assessed in AC 212, Introductory Managerial Accounting.

As part of the overall BSBA assessment, an aspect of critical thinking ability and ethical awareness and willingness to act ethically are assessed in AC 212 Introductory Managerial Accounting.

Having a simpler and more uniform list of categories of prerequisite technical and accounting knowledge and core competencies could help clarify our learning outcomes for our students.

See Appendix A, Exhibit 1: Course objectives mapped into Accounting Program Learning Objectives, and Exhibit 2: BSBA Goals.

1b. To what extent do program faculty gather and present data on student learning?

The accounting faculty had a meeting to discuss teaching strategies and student learning August 25, 2010 before the start of the 2010-11 academic year. The meeting focused on getting better coordination across sections (particularly with the introductory classes, AC 211 & AC 212), the use of Lan-School software to restrict student access to non-course use of computers during class, clarifying assignment requirements for students, the use of grading rubrics, and the merits of distributing these rubrics to students prior to major assignments.

Each semester, the department gathers and summarizes data to assess student learning on the four broad learning outcomes. The data are summarized in two assurance of learning reports: one covering the Accounting Major learning objectives, and the second covering the School of Business level BSBA learning goals which are measured in the introductory accounting classes. These reports are shared electronically with the accounting faculty and posted to the shared drive. Assurance of learning is on every department meeting agenda (eight meetings per academic year), but it is one of several topics. Usually it is a brief discussion of implementation issues regarding a change, a brief informal progress report, or reminder regarding data collection. Most of the discussions regarding the AOL reports and the formulation of improvement measures take place electronically or in informal discussions, and faculty mostly focus on the courses they are teaching.

The School of Business has an annual “closing the loop” retreat, where the each department presents their assurance of learning data, we brainstorm on ideas for improvements, and present improvement plans. The 2011 retreat was held April 11th, and used data collected in the spring and fall 2010 semesters. The 2012 retreat was held April 27th, and used data collected in the spring and fall 2011
semesters. The action plans from this retreat are incorporated into the spring assurance of learning reports. For example, the action plans developed at the April 1, 2011 retreat were incorporated into the assurance of learning reports summarizing the results for the spring 2011 semester, along with any further ideas or recommendations arising from a review of the most recent results.

See Appendix A, Exhibits 3 and 4: Major Level Reporting based on spring 2011, and fall 2011 data; and Exhibits 5 and 6: BSBA Reporting based on spring 2011 and fall 2011 data.

1c. To what extent do program faculty rely on direct measures of student learning that are aligned with program outcomes?

For the past several years, the Accounting department has been developing course embedded assurance of learning outcomes to assess student learning in our program. Increasingly over the past three years we have more confidence in our measures and the emphasis has moved from a focus on the measurements and rubrics and gathering data to a greater emphasis on using the data for improvement. We also believe student performance on all assignments used in grading and the instructors’ objective and subjective impressions of student learning do and should remain an important driver of improvement efforts, but our assurance of learning data is playing an important and growing role in informing and driving our improvement efforts. The use of our AOL data is reflected in the response to question 3 below.

We believe there is always room for improvement in our assessment instruments, and we continue to work on those measures. Better assessment measures lead to more confidence in the validity of the results and those results will be more helpful in informing and driving our improvement efforts.

See Appendix A, Exhibits 3 and 4: Major Level Reporting based on spring 2011 and fall 2011 data; and Exhibits 5 and 6: BSBA Reporting based on spring 2011 and fall 2011 data.

2. To what extent are students meeting student learning outcomes as set by the program faculty?

The department evaluates performance as either above expectations, meeting expectations or below expectations. We believe the goal of the assurance of learning program assessments are to encourage and support continuous improvement over the existing level of performance whatever that may be. However, we set a nominal goal of 75% of students meeting or exceeding expectations for the Major learning objectives, and 70% of students meeting or exceeding expectations for the BSBA learning objectives. After discussion with Dean Lynne Richardson, the chair of the School’s AACSB visitation team, the school is using an 80% threshold for meeting or exceeding expectations. Accounting will adopt that threshold going forward.

Our worst results have consistently been on BSBA accounting mastery learning outcome 2, as measured in the Introductory Financial and Managerial Accounting classes using twenty common multiple-choice questions in each class. We have concluded that we have set the performance standard too high, especially given the new 80% threshold. Going forward, we have changed the performance standards to those used by the Finance Department on their finance mastery assessments measured using common multiple-choice questions. We have retroactively restated the results for BSBA accounting mastery learning outcome 2 in Exhibits 5 and 6 to the new performance standard. The recalibration of the standard does not change the fact that our improvement efforts to date on this
learning outcome have not yielded consistent improvement, and that student performance remains below goal even under the recalibrated standards.

In 2011, the results on BSBA learning outcome 2 declined from spring to fall as measured in the Introductory Managerial classes. We are disappointed and concerned about the decline, but we want to wait for the results of the spring semester before we declare our improvement efforts a failure. The fall 2011 semester included the introduction of a new text, a new online homework manager, a new online practice tool (LearnSmart) and a new set of common questions in the Managerial class. The semester was also disrupted by two extended school closures due to severe storms.

There was only one other BSBA learning outcome measured in accounting where fewer than 80% of students performed at an acceptable level, BSBA goal 2 outcome 1 on critical thinking. Twenty-six percent of students performed below acceptable in the fall semester compared to 22% in the spring. The small decline in performance was disappointing, but both numbers were within the 70% threshold the Accounting Department had been using as a target. We replaced the Ethics Game we tried in spring 2011 with ethical scenarios of our own, so fall 2011 was a transition semester. Instructors selected two different assignments for assessment. We had to modify the rubric for the new assignments. Due to the weather related cancellations, class sections differed in the number of opportunities students had to conduct similar analyses before the graded assessment exercises. The changes and the unique circumstances of the fall make it difficult to directly compare the results to the prior semesters.

At the Major level, more than 80% of students perform at an acceptable level or better on three of our four learning outcomes. On learning outcome 1, student performance deteriorated from 7% below acceptable in the spring to 24% below acceptable in the fall. Two of the three sections of the class moved from an untimed assessment exercise to a timed exercise embedded in an exam. Student performance was considerably poorer on the timed exercise. We had considered reverting to the untimed assignment for assessment, but this spring the decision was made to retain the timed embedded exam assignment as a truer measure of student ability with a slight adjustment in calibration. Overall this will still be a more demanding performance threshold than required for our previous assignment and we will be implementing changes to improve student performance.

In the spring semester 33% of students performed below acceptable on learning outcome 3 as measured in AC 301 (Cost Management). Student performance on a mini-case is used for the assessment. Additional mini-cases were added to the course, giving the students more practice in responding to mini-cases prior to the case used in assessment. In the fall, 89% of students performed at an acceptable level or better.

On balance, we believe students are meeting our learning goals. We strive for continuous improvement in all areas, but are focusing our improvement efforts on the learning outcomes where 20% or more students are falling short of acceptable performance. As we make progress in these areas, we will consider raising our performance thresholds on learning outcomes where students have achieved a consistently high level of performance.

See Appendix A, Exhibits 3 and 4: Major Level Reporting based on spring 2011, and fall 2011 data; and Exhibits 5 and 6: BSBA Reporting based on spring 2011 and fall 2011 data.

3. To what extent do program faculty use student learning outcome data to inform their curriculum and/or make adjustments? Is this use of information appropriate?
As noted above, the department collects data and reports on the results of the assessments of learning outcomes each semester. The reports are shared with the entire department. We have brief discussions in faculty meetings about the results and informal discussions outside the department meetings. The data are used to motivate and plan improvement efforts. The faculty teaching the courses where the assessments occur largely decide on the action items for improvement. The action items are listed in the spring and fall reports. The department as a whole provides greater input to the improvement process at the annual improvement retreats.

The assessment process has resulted in greater coordination and uniformity across sections of the introductory classes. One full-time faculty member acts as coordinator for AC 211 and another for AC 212. The coordination has led to more uniformity in topic coverage and emphasis related to the financial statement analysis project used to assess BSBA outcomes 1 and 3 in AC 211. Coordination in AC 212 has led to a more uniform effort to identify students with weak spreadsheet skills early in the semester and direct those students to extra Excel workshops offered by the School of Business. In previous years we had tried requiring MIS 201 as a co-requisite and adding an Excel workbook to the course. We determined these efforts were not cost effective.

Our biggest challenge at the BSBA level has been outcome 2, measured by the twenty common questions in each class. In AC 212, we tested a comprehensive case that students would complete throughout the semester as a replacement for the twenty common questions. More recently we considered adopting a series of mini-cases (similar to the approach used on cost management) with the last case in the series used for assessment. The faculty teaching the class was not happy with the comprehensive case and were not convinced the mini-cases would be any more effective than the multiple choice questions as an assessment instrument. Our most recent efforts are centering on more extensive use of practice sets of questions similar to the exam questions and embedding the questions throughout the course rather than waiting until the final. We also discovered there was more variability in use of online tools than we thought, requiring even greater coordination especially with adjunct faculty.

In managerial accounting we tried an ethics module in an effort to enrich ethics coverage in the course and provide a more objective assessment of ethics (the ethics case would be completed and graded online). Overall the module was not judged cost effective and this fall we began implementing a series of mini-cases to foster critical thinking. At least two of the cases will deal with ethical issues and the second of those will be used for assessment of the critical thinking and ethics learning outcomes.

At the major level, the biggest lesson learned has been the value of practice, repetition. Not surprisingly, students perform much better when they’ve had multiple assignments with the same formats or requirements. Our efforts have led to more mini-cases being used in AC 301 (Cost Management), more internal control evaluation mini-cases being used in Accounting Information systems and Auditing, and more research problems in AC 313 (Financial Reporting II).

Major Curricular Changes Implemented 2011-2012

Because the many topics in Financial Reporting II have limited the opportunity for practice and repetition, we are transitioning to a three-course Financial Reporting sequence. Our foundations course, which was more of an introduction to the profession, will now essentially be the first course in the Financial Reporting sequence. Each of the three classes will cover eight chapters in a 24 chapter
Intermediate Accounting Textbook. The Foundations of Accounting Course will continue to provide an emphasis on professionalism and ethics, and an overview of financial accounting standards, the conceptual framework, accounting information systems, and the three principal financial statements in external reporting. In addition, the foundations course will now cover the time value of money as it relates to financial reporting (formerly covered in Financial Reporting I), full disclosure in financial reporting and its ethical implications (formerly covered in Financial Reporting II), and reporting issues related to cash and receivables (formerly covered in Financial Reporting I). Financial Reporting I (AC 312) will drop coverage of time value of money and cash and receivables, it will continue to cover reporting issues related to assets other than cash and receivables, and it will now cover accounting reporting issues related to liabilities (formerly covered in Financial Reporting II). Students in Financial Reporting II (AC 313) will now have time for more practice and repetition to gain mastery of the remaining topics: reporting issues related to equity, revenue recognition, earnings per share, the statement of cash flows, and accounting for investments, leases, pensions, and reporting errors.

See Appendix A, Exhibits 3 and 4: Major Level Reporting based on spring 2011, and fall 2011 data; and Exhibits 5 and 6: BSBA Reporting based on spring 2011 and fall 2011 data.

4a. Do the program courses have sufficient enrollment?

We had a surge in enrollment in Accounting following the financial crash in 2008. We have an enrollment cap 30 on each section of our upper division courses (all courses above the introductory financial and managerial accounting courses). Since fall 2009, we have needed four sections of AC 300 (Our Foundations of Accounting Course, now becoming effectively the first in a three course Financial Reporting (Intermediate Accounting) sequence), and three sections each semester of each of the other six required accounting classes. We could use four sections of AC 301 (Cost Management) and AC 302 (Introduction to Individual Income Tax) one semester per year, but we have only offered four sections of those classes one time each. We have generally tied to deal with the demand by allowing capacity overrides (up to 33 per section) and offering the classes in summer session and in the case of AC 302 in winter.

The elective classes in accounting with their enrollments for the past five semesters including spring 2012, are presented in Appendix B, Exhibit 1. Other than student internships, the lowest enrollment for a class has been Advanced Accounting with an enrollment of 11. Overall the enrollments are sufficient in all courses. AC 420 and AC 421 our two upper division Managerial elective are each offered only once per year. Our Accounting for Nonprofits class (AC 430) also offered only once per year opposite AC 455 (Internal Auditing) has become increasingly popular.

See Appendix B, Exhibit 1: Enrollment in Accounting Elective Classes.

4b. What contribution does the undergraduate program make to the general education program?

The Accounting program does not offer any classes currently included in general education. The Accounting program provides a pool of students that need a broad based foundation in the liberal arts, enabling programs that offer general education courses sufficient enrollment to offer a broader range of courses available to all students.

4c. If applicable, what contribution does the program make to interdisciplinary programs?
The Accounting program offers two core business classes, Introductory Financial Accounting and Introductory Managerial Accounting that are required of business majors in all disciplines. This is only interdisciplinary in the sense that business administration can be viewed as being comprised of a number of distinct disciplines. The department offers a course in industrial accounting that is required by some majors in the School of Engineering and Technology. One section is offered each semester. AC 521 Accounting and Performance Measurement for Lean Enterprises, was a required course for students in the Masters of Technology Management program. This is offered each spring as a linked course together with AC 421, Accounting for Lean Enterprises, an undergraduate managerial accounting elective. Effective this fall, the School of Engineering and Technology has decided to make AC 521 an elective course rather than a required course in the Masters of Technology Management program.

Students in other business disciplines (especially Finance and to a lesser extent management) can elect to take (one to three) upper division classes in Accounting as part of their major requirements. Students in other schools in the University can elect a business minor and can take three upper division accounting classes if they elect to focus their minor on accounting.

Aside from the above service to other disciplines, the accounting department does not participate in any interdisciplinary program.

5a. Do a sufficient number of students complete the program?

The Accounting Department experienced a surge in enrollment following the financial crisis in the fall of 2008. As shown in Appendix C, Exhibit 1, Accounting graduated 151 students in 2011, and increase of over 50% from 2008. These are calendar year totals, so the numbers for 2012 are not yet available. We expect between 120 and 150 accounting graduates. This is certainly more than sufficient for a viable program.

See Appendix C, Exhibit 1: Accounting Graduates by Year, Classified by Time to Degree, and Appendix Exhibit 2: Graduation and Enrollment Headcount Data.

5b. Are they graduating in a timely fashion?

Based on the numbers reported in Appendix C, Exhibit 1, of those graduating each year 2008 – 2011 over 80% graduated in 4 years or less and over 90% graduated in 6 years or less. This includes transfer students, but it also includes part-time students. The available evidence suggests that on balance, students are graduating in a timely fashion.

See Appendix C, Exhibit 1: Accounting Graduates by Year, Classified by Time to Degree.

6. In what ways do program faculty engage students in curricular activities and those beyond the classroom that include undergraduate research, graduate research, community engagement, and international education?

Research
Accounting is a professional practice and our undergraduate program is designed to prepare students for that professional practice. In class our students engage in research on applying accounting principles and rules using the FASB Accounting Standards Codification, on appropriate tax treatments using the Internal Revenue Code, and they perform comparative financial statement research using the
Securities and Exchange Commission website and financial accounting databases. These research activities build their critical thinking and research skills and are more directly relevant to the demands of the accounting profession than academic research studies, especially at the undergraduate level.

International Education

As U.S. GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) moves closer to a convergence with IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards) we will incorporate more coverage of IFRS into our financial reporting sequence. Our emphasis is on understanding the similarities and differences between the systems, and the implications of those differences to users, issuers and preparers of financial statements. We do not explore the cultural differences that may have led to the reporting differences. Managerial accounting practice is multi-cultural and global. Practices that originated in Europe, North America and Asia are used throughout the world. Our emphasis is on understanding these practices and their suitability to a given set of circumstances, not on the cultural characteristics that may have stimulated their development. Our tax accounting classes are similarly practice oriented and they emphasize reporting and decision-making related to the U.S. tax code, even when dealing with foreign operations or foreign source income. We encourage our students to be culturally and globally aware, but that is not an emphasis within our courses.

Community engagement

The Accounting Department of the School of Business established two Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites during academic year 2010-2011, with one site located on the CCSU campus at the Student Computing Center at the Marcus White Annex, and a second site located at Community Central, a CCSU-sponsored community outreach center located in downtown New Britain at 117 West Main Street. At these two sites CCSU student volunteers, who had been trained by the IRS, help disabled, elderly, and low-income taxpayers electronically file their federal and state income tax returns at no charge. Student volunteers at the CCSU campus site service CCSU students only (as a ‘closed’ site), whereas student volunteers at the Community Central site service members of the greater community who qualify for VITA services (as an ‘open’ site). Together, the two sites helped 107 taxpayers file their returns and tax refunds of over $153,000 were returned to these taxpayers. A summary report is included as Exhibit 1 in Appendix D.

CCSU trains VITA volunteers not only for the two CCSU-sponsored sites, but also for other sites throughout the commuting area. In preparation for the most recent tax season, CCSU and its partners (HRA, Co-Opportunity, and IRS) trained 41 students in November, 2011. Approximately 10 of those students opted to volunteer at the CCSU Campus site and approximately 5 students volunteered at the Community Central site.

We agreed to host a CSCPA Career Conference in early November 2011 for Connecticut high school students statewide who may be interested in exploring careers in accounting. Unfortunately the conference had to be cancelled as a result of the freak October snowstorm that left much of the state without electricity for a week or more.

Workforce Development

The distinctive element of CCSU that is most relevant and most important to the Accounting program is workforce development. We viewed the Career conference mentioned above as part of workforce development as well as community engagement.
We encourage our students to interact with accounting professionals. An accounting career fair attracting many local employers to campus is held every fall. The firms recruit graduating students for full time positions, and continuing students for co-op and internship positions. We encourage our students to attend the fair and meet the recruiters even if they are a year away from being eligible for an internship. Many of the recruiters are CCSU alumni, and the early interactions can help our students get a better appreciation for the demands of the profession. We encourage our students to attend School of Business SPA (Student Professional Advancement) Sessions held throughout the school year. Accounting and business professionals from the area lead most of the SPA sessions. The sessions cover a host of topics including basic and advanced Excel skills, dress for success, and resume preparation and interviewing skills. We have the Hartford area IMA (Institute of Management Accountants) chapter have one of their monthly educational meetings on campus each spring, making it easier for students to attend and providing them with a chance to interact with the management accounting professionals.

The student run Accounting Society has late afternoon and evening meetings featuring professionals, representatives from area graduate programs in accounting, and representatives from professional examination review programs. Twenty meetings were held during the 2011-12 academic year. Some of the meetings featured multiple speakers (see Appendix D, Exhibit 2).

A major strategic initiative for the School of Business is to provide a cohort of students with classes having an industry emphasis. Insurance and financial services was the initial industry chosen. Mary McCarthy a professor with extensive executive experience in the Insurance industry has, been our department representative on this initiative. She will be teaching an Introductory Accounting course with an insurance and financial services emphasis this Fall.

We try to encourage our students to take advantage of internships and co-operative education whenever possible. Many of our students work part or full time and are unable to leave their current positions for a short-term position. Nevertheless, we are trying to find more internship opportunities for our students. During the calendar year 2011 we had 18 students complete internships for credit. The number for the 2011-12 academic year was 16 (10 students completed internships for credit during spring 2012, down from 12 in spring 2011). Some accounting firms offer summer internships, but many full time students are reluctant to take them for credit because they have to pay additional tuition for summer courses. Information on Accounting students taking Co-ops were not available.

See Appendix D, Exhibit 1: CCSU VITA Partner Sites Report and Exhibit 2: Accounting Society Meeting Speakers.

7a. What future plans does the department report?

As shown in Appendix E, Exhibits 1 and 2, we had notable success on some of our objectives, and made little to no progress on others. we have been successful in expanding the number of opportunities for our students to interact with professionals, and we have expanded the range of internship and employment opportunities for our students, but we have not been able to increase the number of students participating in for credit internships.quantity of internships offered. We have not been able to establish effective communication and coordination with CACE and with corporate outreach conducted through the Dean’s office.

We have made considerable progress using assessment data to drive improvement efforts, but we could do much better coordinating assessment and improvement efforts in courses taught by
multiple instructors. We also have not completed our review of writing presentation, and software application assignments across the curriculum. We have not established a survey of alumni to get external validation of our learning outcomes.

We have made progress in faculty scholarly contributions. Our challenge is to maintain faculty quality given our inability (due to contract limitations and the continuing slow recovery) to offer market level or even near market level salaries for academically qualified faculty.

We believe one reason for our lack of progress on some objectives is that we are taking on too many objectives given the resources we have available. We there is the normal daily work that must be completed, and during the past year we spent a considerable amount of time on three tenure-track searches, two to replace emergency appointments and a third to replace a retiring faculty member. We were able to recruit two new faculty members, but not a third.

Our goals and the objectives related to those goals we will work on in the coming year are:

1. **Improve relationships with CPA firms and area businesses.**
   a. Establish clear lines of communication and coordination with CACE and with the School of Business Dean’s office regarding: the Accounting Career Fair, Businesses offering co-op positions in Accounting, Businesses on campus to interview for internships, co-ops or jobs in accounting.
   b. Establish clear lines of communication and coordination with the School of Business development officer on visits to accounting firms or accounting professionals.

2. **Increase student participation in internships and CO-OPS.**
   a. Identify all students participating in accounting internships for credit, non-credit internships, and co-operative education placements in accounting each academic year. Establish clear lines of communication and coordination with CACE and with the School of Business Dean’s office to ensure accurate and up-to-date information.

3. **Continue Curriculum Review and Improvement.**
   a. Have a Friday workshop to complete the program review of writing, presentation, spreadsheet, and other programming requirements across the curriculum. Evaluate the results and identify changes needed.

4. **Use assessment data more effectively to inform and drive improvement.**
   a. Improve coordination of assessment and improvement efforts. Identify one faculty member to be responsible for leading and coordinating data gathering and implementation of improvements in every course with sections taught by more than one faculty member. Reduce the number of changes implemented at any one time but improve the consistency of implementation and the assessment of the impact of the changes.
   b. Work with the alumni association and the Development office to get email addresses of recent graduates. Conduct a brief survey with graduates on employment and professional certifications, and ask for feedback on our program and suggestions for improvement.

5. **Support and Increase faculty scholarship.**
   a. Seek access to financial accounting and securities databases to aid research efforts of current faculty and help attract qualified candidates for new openings.
b. Monitor and encourage faculty scholarship. Schedule Brown bag presentations of faculty
research in progress if requested.

See Appendix E, Exhibit 1: Progress on 2011-12 Department Goals, and Exhibit 2: Summary of
Intellectual Contributions by Accounting Department Faculty.

7b. Is there a solid rationale for those plans that aligns with the university’s mission and strategic plan?

**Improve relationships with CPA firms and area businesses.** For our students to be thoughtful
responsible citizens and professionals, they must clearly understand the challenges and opportunities
they will face in professional practice. Having closer relationships and interactions with practicing
professionals will foster that understanding. It should also create more internship cooperative
education and employment opportunities for our students, create opportunities for research or
stimulate ideas for practically relevant research by our faculty, and increase the support for our
University in the local business community.

**Increase student participation in internships and CO-OPS.** Experiential learning has consistently been
shown to foster deep learning. What students learn during their internship or cooperative experience
can also give them a better appreciation of the relevance and applicability of their classroom learning
experiences.

The above two goals directly relate to workforce and economic development, one for the four
distinctive element emphasized by CCSU. Given our limited resources, our objectives for 2012-13 for
the above two goals seek to develop communication and coordination system that will allow us to take
full advantage of existing efforts on the campus.

**Continue Curriculum Review and Improvement.** Seeking continuous improvement is an essentially part
of being a learning community dedicated to teaching. Because of the nature of our program, this goal is
also related to workforce and economic development. Our effort to review written and oral
communication and technology (software application) throughout our curriculum has been a
department objective for three years now, but it has been set aside as more pressing matters have
emerged. By reducing the number of objectives we take on, we intend to leverage our past work and
use this review to foster significant improvement in our curriculum.

**Use assessment data more effectively to inform and drive improvement.** We have not taken full
advantage of the considerable effort we’ve put into assessment. Often we’ve tried to make too many
changes at once, we haven’t effectively communicated those changes to faculty teaching in every
section of a course. The result has been inconsistent implementations and difficulty in assessing which
improvements are effective. During 2012-13 we want to focus on making fewer changes, but assuring
the changes we make are fully implemented and assessed for effectiveness. We also want seek
feedback from our alumni on the effectiveness of our programs in preparing them for their careers.

**Support and Increase faculty scholarship.** As a community of learners dedicated to teaching and
scholarship faculty scholarship is essential. In the past three years we have added faculty with both the
training and the interest in pursuing research that requires access to financial accounting and securities
databases. We’ve had a chicken-egg dilemma related to this research in the past. The databases are
not available at CCSU, because not enough faculty were conducting research in this area, and we were
not able to attract faculty with the skills and inclination to conduct financial accounting research using archival databases in part because we would not be able to provide them with access to the data they need. Currently our faculty doing research in this area must rely on contacts with faculty at other universities to gain access to the data they need. In combination with Finance, we may now have a critical mass of faculty to justify seeking more direct access.

See Appendix E, Exhibit 1: Progress on 2011-12 Department Goals, and Exhibit 2: Summary of Intellectual Contributions by Accounting Department Faculty.

7c. What faculty, space, and financial resources would be needed?

Aside from access to the research databases, all of our objectives for 2012-13 require no additional resources. They require only coordination with and cooperation from CACE, the Development Office, and the Alumni Association. A full subscription to the Wharton Databases could cost as much as $40,000 annually. We would like to explore other options, including a reduced set of databases, sharing a subscription with our sister state universities and/or obtaining some corporate sponsorship or outside funding.

More generally, we have two resource issues that affect our program. The smaller issue is office space. Having two or three additional faculty offices on the fourth floor of Vance would allow all School of Business faculty to reside on this floor, improving communication and fostering collaboration. Currently two faculty offices are located in the suite used for student advising on the second floor. These are fine spaces, but they are in a noisy high traffic area, and they are isolated from the remaining faculty. A third faculty office was carved out of the fourth floor workroom.

Faculty salaries and the existing contract regime is a much greater threat to our program. The caps on salaries by rank limit us to maximum offers of approximately $72,000 annually for an Assistant Professor and $90,000 annually for an Associate Professor. The market for academically qualified Assistant Professors, even at teaching institutions is easily $90,000 to $100,000, and is an order of magnitude higher than that at research schools. Because of Salary compression in the market, the difference in the market at teaching institutions for Associate and Full Professor ranks is not that much higher than for Assistants (perhaps $100,000 - $120,000 for Associates, $110,000 - $130,000 for full professors, so the amount we are below market is less at the higher ranks, provided we are able to hire at those ranks and offer the maximum salary the contract allows. In the last three years we have not been able to attract a qualified Assistant Professor and we have not been authorized to hire at the level of Full Professor. Most of our applicants regardless of rank withdraw when they hear our salaries, and we have had more applicants to whom we’ve made offers turn us down upon receiving a better offer elsewhere than we have had accept our offers. The contract does not allow us to hire any faculty on term appointments at the Instructor level. We can only hire Instructors as emergency appointments, and the same individual cannot serve under an emergency contract more than two years in any six. Thus we are left with an aging faculty and an extremely limited pool from which to draw qualified replacements as our current faculty retires.
External reviewers, only, will answer these question in addition to the seven listed above:

1. Is the allocation of resources appropriate for each of the department’s programs, i.e. sufficient number of faculty, direct instructional expenditures, etc.? What resource allocations or reallocations appear necessary?

2. To what extent does overall faculty creative activity contribute to the discipline?