

Lewis College of Business
Assurance of Learning in the MBA Cluster
AOL Model Timeline:
Fall 2006 to Present

The MBA Cluster consists of three graduate programs: regular MBA (MBA), India-MBA (IMBA), and Executive MBA (EMBA) programs. In what follows we lay out the timeline for the development of AOL for the MBA Cluster:

2006-2008: AOL Director was Dr. Christopher Cassidy, appointed by Dean Paul Uselding

2008 to 2009: Period of Transition

1. Changing of AOL Director and Re-Establishment of the AOL Committee: At the start of fall 2008, Interim Dean Chong Kim replaced Dr. Chris Cassidy with Dr. Harlan Smith. Harlan worked with Dean Kim during the fall to reconstitute the AOL Committee (now called the AOL Task Force). Knowing the need for leadership on AOL matters at the graduate level, several faculty active in graduate programs were appointed to the AOL Task Force. The original graduate-level members were: Dr. Alberto Coustasse (MSHCA), Dr. Katherine Karl (MSHRM; now departed from MU); Kurt Olmosk (MGT & Critical Thinking; now retired), Dr. Weishen Wang (Finance; college Graduate Committee; now departed from MU), and Dr. Uday Tate (MKT; MBA programs). Uday agreed to coordinate AOL in the MBA Cluster.

2. Development of Learning Goals and Associated Rubrics: From the latter part of the fall of 2008 to the spring of 2009, Uday met with the MBA Cluster Faculty (consisting of those graduate faculty teaching MBA, EMBA, and IMBA courses) to develop four Learning Goals, in addition to the existing Learning Goal of Written Communication, which had been developed in 2006. The additional Learning Goals were: Oral Communication, Leadership Skills, Problem Solving/Decision Making, and Managerial Knowledge. The four Goals and their respective Measurable Learning Objectives were reviewed, discussed and approved by the MBA Cluster faculty in the spring of 2009. The MBA Cluster faculty then reviewed, discussed, and approved a set of rubrics for the additional Learning Goals.

3. AOL Model of One Set of Goals, Rubrics, Results, and Improvement Strategies across the three programs: Our “One-AOL for MBA Cluster” approach during this period was based on the rationale that the curricula of the three programs (EMBA, MBA, IMBA) were very similar: A common set of 10 required Core Courses plus 2 Electives, along with five optional Foundation courses. This “One-AOL for MBA Cluster” model permitted us to use the AOL data/results/improvement strategies generated from one of the programs to make improvements in the other two programs. For example, the AOL data for Leadership Skills were generated using MGT699-EMBA in fall of 2009. The EMBA Coordinator then shared the results with the entire MBA Cluster faculty, who developed strategies for improvement using these data, input from course instructors, student feedback, and benchmarking. These strategies were shared with the faculty teaching courses in MBA and IMBA.

Under the “One-AOL for MBA Cluster” model, an AOL loop was defined as:

(Ref: Dr. Karen Tarnoff, AACSB AOL Consultant)

1. Gather Assessment Data (Assessment#1)
2. Analyze/review Data
3. Develop Improvement Strategies
4. Implement Improvement Strategies
5. Gather Assessment Data (Assessment#2)
6. Analyze/review Data

2010-2011: AOL Model of Separation of MBA, EMBA, and IMBA

During her July 2009 visit to Marshall University, Karen Tarnoff, who had served as our de facto AACSB AOL Consultant since 2006, began to urge the LCOB leadership to think about designing separate AOL programs for MBA, EMBA, and IMBA. Her point was that the target population of each program was different from the other two. The IMBA was delivered in India, for students from India; the regular MBA is located in Huntington, West Virginia, for students from the United States, along with several students from such foreign countries/regions as Vietnam, Korea, China, the Middle East, France, New Zealand, and South America. Finally, EMBA is delivered in South Charleston, West Virginia, for working professionals with at least five years of significant managerial experience.

During academic year 2009/10 the MBA Cluster faculty discussed various options for modifying our AOL effort to take account of Karen’s concerns. By the start of summer 2010 it became clear that the best solution would be to run fully separate AOL programs. Each of the MBA Cluster programs, while retaining the same Goals, Learning Objectives, and approved rubrics, was thus required to generate AOL data on its own. Each program was also required to review AOL results and develop its own strategies for improvement, i. e., complete AOL loops separately from the other two programs. As a result of the new AOL model, there are now separate AOL Coordinators, one for each component of the MBA Cluster: AOL-MBA (Tomblin in Spring & Summer 2011; Maheshwari in 2011-12); AOL-EMBA (Tate); and AOL-IMBA (Maheshwari). Our AOL report for the PRT reflects the separation of the three programs in 2010.

Under this new model, our working definition of an AOL Loop is laid out in our answer to Question 11, on the list of 27 questions provided to us by the PRT a little over a week ago.