



**OBTC 2015 at University of La Verne  
June 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Submission Template**

**SUBMISSION GUIDANCE**

- \* Remove all identifying properties from this document \**
- \* All files must be saved in PDF format \**
- \*Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document\**
- \*Only one document should be submitted\**

## Submission Template for the 2015 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

### 1) Title of Proposal:

Integrated Business Core for Freshmen: Introducing Cross-Discipline Connections

### 2) Abstract:

*Please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words). If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.*

Numerous business schools teach core business classes in a unified, integrated manner. Our session focuses specifically on the first year student and curriculum designed for a three year degree program. Designed to promote critical thinking and competency development, this curriculum engages students through non-seat time experiences. Discipline-specific knowledge is delivered in modules and reinforced through integrating group experiences and projects.

We present the curriculum design, as well as quantitative and qualitative feedback from both faculty and students participating in the program. We will discuss obstacles encountered in the development and teaching, as well as lessons learned from the classroom.

### 3) Keywords:

*Use three or four keywords to describe your session.*

Business Core, Curriculum Integration, Teaching

### 4) Format

- Activity or exercise  
 Discussion roundtable (60 minute only)  
 General discussion session

### 5) Time Requested:

- 30 Minutes  
 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)  
 90 Minutes

### 6) Planning Details:

*Does your session have any special requirements for space or materials?*

No

### 7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

*What are 2-4 specific learning outcomes that participants will get from your session?*

Participants in this session will be able to identify strategies for helping freshmen understand how business functions are interrelated. The presentation is also designed to encourage a discussion about how faculty can accelerate students' understanding of complex business concepts. Session participants will be challenged to think through projects and experiences that encourage exploration outside of the classroom.

## 8) Management or Teaching Topics:

*Describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Please include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

Our presentation connects business education theories of curriculum design and cross-functional learning. Building upon previous work, we propose an integrated business core program to be implemented across a three-year undergraduate degree program. This research specifically addresses needs of first-year students. We contribute to discussion of the following topics:

1. Integrative, alternate business education has been a popular topic of discussion for the past two decades (Pharr, 2000; Stover & Morris, 1997; Walker & Black, 2000). Numerous schools have attempted original models that seek to increase student performance and understanding of how businesses operate. Scholars have proposed several models of integration, specifying how specific topics can be incorporated at the discipline and integrative level (Barber, Borin, Cerf, & Swartz, 2001; Teece, 2011). However, many of these schools have abandoned or significantly modified their integrated programs (Strempek, Husted, & Gray, 2010). Further, others have vigorously defended the silo model of instruction, suggesting that integration skills are best left for those pursuing graduate degrees (Campbell, Heroit, & Finney, 2006). While curricula goals vary by school and student population, research suggests that integrated business classes have the potential to enhance student learning and provide a closer connection to the business community (Bell, 2010; Burdryk, 2013; Buttermore, 2011; Weber & Englehart, 2011).

Given the political and operational challenges of modifying a core curriculum, many programs teach integration between disciplines as a single course, taught at the junior or senior level (Bell, 2010). For examples, see courses taught at the University of Virginia, University of Oklahoma, Central Missouri University, among others. With few exceptions (Borin, 2004; Bell, 2010), little data has been published to demonstrate integration as a more successful method of learning.

2. Bloom's taxonomy has been influential in designing curricula seeking to develop explicit critical thinking skills (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1956; Krathwohl, 2002). However, other cognitive learning models suggest enhancement through processes consisting of a) foundational knowledge b) application c) integration d) human dimension e) caring f) learning how to learn (Fink, 2013). Moving beyond the cognitive framework proposed by Bloom, Fink's model incorporates a holistic, learning-centered approach to course design. This model recommends higher levels of student engagement, including interactions

amongst peers, faculty, and the broader community.

Building on these streams of research, the first year of our integrated business core focuses on the foundational knowledge and application elements of Fink’s (2013) model. We present four primary business disciplines (accounting, economics, marketing, management) in brief modules, supplemented by application based classes that engage students through collaborative projects. During the second semester of the first year, students are organized into groups and work with a local company to better understand how these disciplines are used in daily business processes. As this program began in the fall of 2014, we have collected data from the design process, faculty/instructor journals, student course evaluations, and student surveying. Discussion of the results of this research and a review of how the program was constructed would be presented during the session.

**9) Session Description and Plan:**

*What will you actually do in this session? What activities will you facilitate, how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you’d like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session’s goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session. Include a timeline for your session.*

Time	Topic	Activities
7-10 Minutes	Introduce presenters and project background	Inquire about session participants’ teaching or involvement in curriculum that integrates multiple disciplines
5-7 Minutes	Describe goals of integrating business core classes throughout a student’s education  This sets the scene for understanding what program is intended to accomplish	Presentation
5 Minutes	Background on three year degree program: Program outcomes, assessment, current status	Presentation

<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Description of courses, learning objectives, integrating strategies, and implemented curriculum.</p> <p>Presenters will discuss the successes and challenges encountered during the design phase and implementation of the integrated business core. Discussion on the evolution of the idea will also be included.</p>	<p>Presentation</p>
<p>5-10 minutes</p>	<p>Data from faculty and students will be shared. This includes major themes taken from faculty experience journals written by those teaching in the program. Further, a student survey was created specifically to solicit feedback on the outcomes related to integration.</p>	<p>Presentation/facilitated discussion</p> <p>This data helps illustrate areas where participants can relate to other experiences and potentially apply our experiences to their programs.</p>
<p>3 minutes</p>	<p>Summary of key results and contributions of research</p>	<p>Presentation</p>
<p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Questions about the research will be fielded. A discussion about experiences teaching discipline-specific and cross-functional knowledge will be facilitated based on these questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What is the appropriate level of foundational knowledge needed to make connections?</li> </ol>	<p>Facilitated Discussion</p>

	b. How do students best learn about relationships between the disciplines? c. How can these processes best be assessed?	
5 minutes	Wrap up	

### 10) For Activities and Exercises:

*Attach any materials needed to run the activity and debriefing questions. Evidence for effectiveness may also be included.*

No additional materials are needed for activities or exercises.

### 11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

*What is the contribution of your session?*

Our primary contribution is to build on the literature of integrated business programs by focusing on foundational knowledge for freshmen. We support our curriculum design with detailed learning outcomes and data collected from participants in the program. By sharing our experiences, we hope to further the discussion on strategies for helping students learn how business functions are related. Further, by tying this core curriculum into a three year degree program, we introduce strategies for student learning.

### 12) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of Learning in Community?

Our integrated business core program and three year degree program incorporate several elements designed to build community. For example, as Freshmen, students participate in courses spanning fall and spring semesters to help foster closer connections to each other and faculty. Unlike traditional classes, faculty members have numerous touch points, creating a community of learning throughout the student's undergraduate experience. This community is extended to local businesses providing projects for the freshman courses and beyond.

### **13) Unique Contribution to OBTC:**

*Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?*

No, this is original work, not currently submitted or under review. It would be presented for the first time at OBTC.

### **14) References and/or Additional Materials:**

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