**Accounting and Finance Department**

**Common Curriculum Visioning**

1. **What are the strengths of your department/program? What do you already do well?  Remember that these responses will be shared with the community at large, so please use this opportunity to brag a little bit.  What do you want people outside your department/program to know about your successes and strengths?**
2. We are one of only three schools at which all four Big 4 firms actively recruit on campus. The other two? St. Thomas and the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management.
3. We offer an accounting major that prepares students to take the CPA exam and obtain their licenses within 4 years, with summer and extra work - and still study abroad. With a 150-credit hour requirement to get a CPA license, this is no small task. It allows students to get into the work world a full year before most other programs, which emphasize a five-year program of study.
4. We offer a finance program that rivals those offered by business schools. Our finance program includes a balance of finance, accounting, economics, math and general business courses.
5. Students are engaged in several major-related activities and competitions outside of the academic setting.
6. Although internships are not required, a large percentage of our students are employed at internships during the spring or summer of their junior year. Several students each year retain internships during the summer of their sophomore years.
7. We have an outstanding reputation with employers and alums.
   1. All four of the Big 4 recruit on campus.
   2. A number of fabulous finance companies recruit on campus.
   3. Of Minnesota’s 18 Fortune 500 companies, nine recruit our students on campus.
   4. Most of the individuals who recruit our students are former alums themselves.
8. The Accounting and Finance faculty have a lot of real world experience – accounting, tax, legal and finance – and we use a lot of real world examples in class. Most faculty either currently hold, or formerly held professional licenses in their field.
9. We administer a senior survey each year. On a five-point scale, the students give us a 4.76 on “the program challenges me intellectually”. As one student put it in response to what their favorite aspect of the program was, “The challenge. The competitiveness of my accounting friends was incredible, it always pushed me to become and do better and better each year.” Our next highest rating is a 4.58 on “the faculty are technically competent”. As one student put it, “The professors were always available and willing to help. Students were held accountable and expected to be engaged.”
10. We set department goals based on our 2008 program review, and we’ve pretty well nailed them, including increasing our focus on technology and business writing/communication.
11. **What do you wish you could do better, or do more of?  What would it take (resources, support, etc.) for you to reach those goals?**

As a department, we have generally focused on what we can do to improve the quality of our teaching and looked at resources that are needed to accomplish that primary goal. We are working on a “classroom of the future” now. It would be nice to convert another classroom into a “classroom of the future,” but obviously, it would take a considerable amount of money.

It would be nice to have the time to expand our career preparation website for our ACFN students and create other web or video based student resources, including auxiliary resources for course content. We tend to rely on who is available and their passions; sometimes things slip through the cracks. It would be nice to have someone who can devote more attention to this area and alumni relations in general.

1. **Leaving aside discipline specific knowledge, in what ways does your department/program best contribute to providing our students with a liberal education for their lives beyond college, as informed and engaged citizens, productive employees, ethical beings, etc.?**

For Accounting and Finance majors, we have courses that help students prepare for many aspects of life after college. One example is Business Writing and Communication. In this course, we make it clear to students what a professional communication should look like and what types of communication to avoid. Also, in our capstone courses, we focus considerably on what it means to be a good person in the work world.

Our majors are particularly blessed to have a liberal arts background once they begin their professional careers. Many problems arise in business when professionals lack an understanding of an issue – and are afraid to admit what they don’t know and seek others with that knowledge. A liberal arts training teaches students how to learn a variety of subjects and gives them the skills and confidence to tackle ‘foreign’ concepts.

The Community aspect of CSB/SJU – part of our liberal arts tradition and part of the nature of these institutions – also benefits our students in their lives beyond college. We find that recruiters are eager to hire our students because:

* They are great ‘people’ people, looking to reach out to others and become part of the community.
* They tend to stay longer at their employers, which is particularly important when companies evaluate their return on their recruiting budget. For example, EY (a Big 4 CPA firm) boasts that 10% of the hundreds of Minneapolis employees are CSB/SJU alums; however, our graduates do not make up 10% of their incoming recruits.

For non-majors, the Department of Accounting and Finance complements other areas of liberal arts in giving students a solid foundation of how businesses work. When students enter the work world, they will have interacted with the professors, most of which have been in the work world for an extended period of time, and seen how a liberal arts education can segue nicely into a post-graduate employment opportunity.

We build close relationships with our students and hold conversations with students on a host of topics.

Clearly each of us on the faculty appreciate and cherish the liberal arts aspects of our teaching. It also gives us opportunities at every turn to teach ethics, kindness, and professionalism. In addition:

* We encourage all of our students to study abroad. Every sample 4-year plan we show students has study abroad incorporated.
* We encourage our students to minor in traditional liberal arts areas, such as Economics, Art, Music, Computer Science, a foreign language, etc.

1. **Are there ways in which you would like to see your department/program contribute to liberal education that so far it has not been able to?**

The Department of Accounting and Finance, in recent years and today, makes faculty contributions to both the ethics requirement and the first year seminars in the common curriculum. Also, the Fraud class has an experiential learning component.

The department has a long history of contributing to the core/common curriculum. Many years ago, Lucy Larson taught Symposium and many years administered the Symposium part of the Core Curriculum. Various faculty members have taught courses in the core/common curriculum over a period of decades.

Our department is willing and eager to put more effort into these types of classes, but we are limited in our available faculty. Our average class size this semester is approximately 25 students; we also have three faculty doing overloads for the year.