

It is not possible to know everything, so learning how to analyze is the key

The knowledge base of our world is increasing a rapid pace so whether our students pursue graduate school or enter the business world they must be able to learn quickly to identify, analyze, and evaluate new problems and situations in a constantly changing environment. This requires them to be creative, to use analytical thinking skills, to work in teams, to be skillful in both written and oral communications and to use multi-disciplinary knowledge in addition to their core business management knowledge. These are skills we encourage and incorporate into our curriculum in the Business Department at Guilford.

Guilford specializes in teaching

Guilford is a teaching college and the goal of our business management professors is to provide our students with a learning environment that provides the opportunity for them to be successful not only during their time at Guilford but also in their post Guilford endeavors. We are very much aware of the studies showing low levels of student learning and achievement resulting in their own frustration and community disappointment. This particularly occurs in larger schools and more research oriented schools with large class sizes in introductory courses and the use of teaching assistants for primary delivery of course material.

Passive learning methods exacerbate student learning difficulties

We recognize that in many cases, traditional teaching methods exacerbate student-learning problems with the passive presentation of content. This type of presentation often leads to student difficulty in understanding and applying concepts and finding relevance in the material. We use a variety of presentation methods in the Business Department including hands on experience, research, oral presentation, technology skills development, and group work in addition to the traditional lecture approach.

Actively engaging students improves learning outcomes and student satisfaction

We address this situation by focusing on the process of education in addition to the content. We recognize that students not only need to learn fundamental content but also need to learn how to learn. We use learning methods that actively engage our students in the process resulting not only in improved student satisfaction and better retention of content but in better preparation to engage in the new and complicated problems they will eventually face. These methods typically include (1) starting with a problem, data, model, or idea to be examined and analyzed, (2) searching for information needed to use in the analysis, (3) analyzing the information usually in small groups or teams, (3) supporting a conclusion, (4) presenting the results in a meaningful oral or written presentation, and (5) reflecting on what improvements could be made in the process. Experiential learning represents a high level of student engagement so we support this activity with internships with many area businesses.

We develop our faculty

Disciplinary masters and doctorate programs are designed to ensure a certain level of content mastery not to ensure a level of teaching capability. Therefore, we spend resources to develop our faculty on a continuing basis to support our engaged learning philosophy. This development includes attending not only disciplinary conferences but also attending teaching conferences. We provide in-house seminars twice a month. Our more experienced and trained faculty members act as mentors to new faculty by reviewing and improving their course delivery

methods. Finally, a significant part of our faculty promotion evaluation process addresses teaching excellence.

Summary

We prepare our students for the future by:

- Developing critical thinking skills
- Developing creativity
- Developing oral and written communication skills
- Developing teamwork skills
- Developing multi-disciplinary skills

We do this by:

- Focusing on and excelling in teaching
- Using small class sizes even in introductory courses
- Using learning methods that actively engage our students
- Using internships as a form of experiential learning
- Ensuring an appropriate mix of masters and doctorate degree holders in our faculty to ensure content knowledge
- Hiring faculty that have had actual working experience in their field
- Developing our faculty in engaging learning methods
- Assessing our faculty on teaching excellence