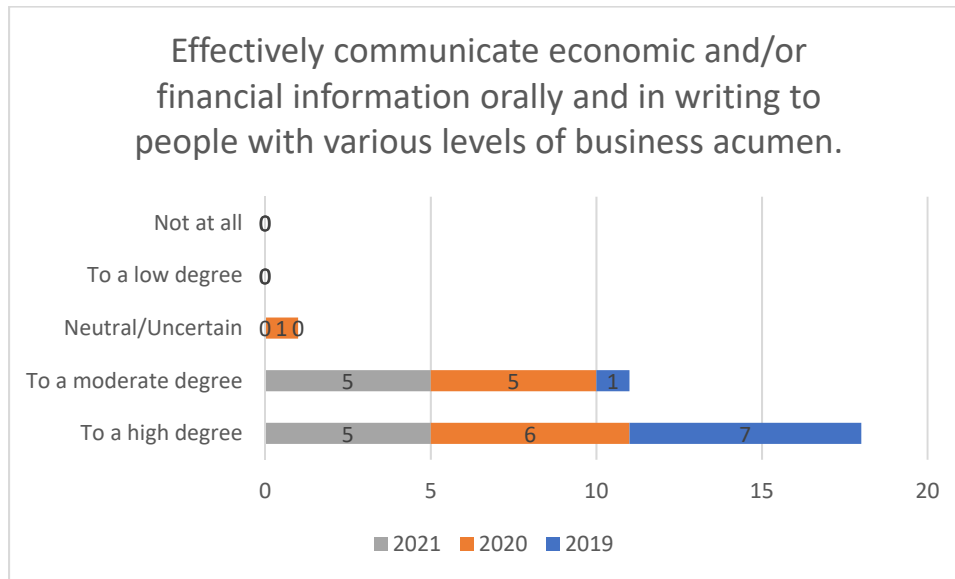


Economics and Business Annual Assessment report 2020-2021

The department met on May 18th, 2021 at 11 am over Microsoft Teams. Five members of the department were present. One department member was on medical leave for the academic year and another was unavailable during the meeting time. While the Economics and Business department gathered direct and indirect data on all learning goals, in 20-21 the department is focusing on LG6: **Effectively communicate economic and/or financial information orally and in writing to people with different levels of business acumen.** We also collected information about students' post-graduation plans and internship participation.

Indirect assessment

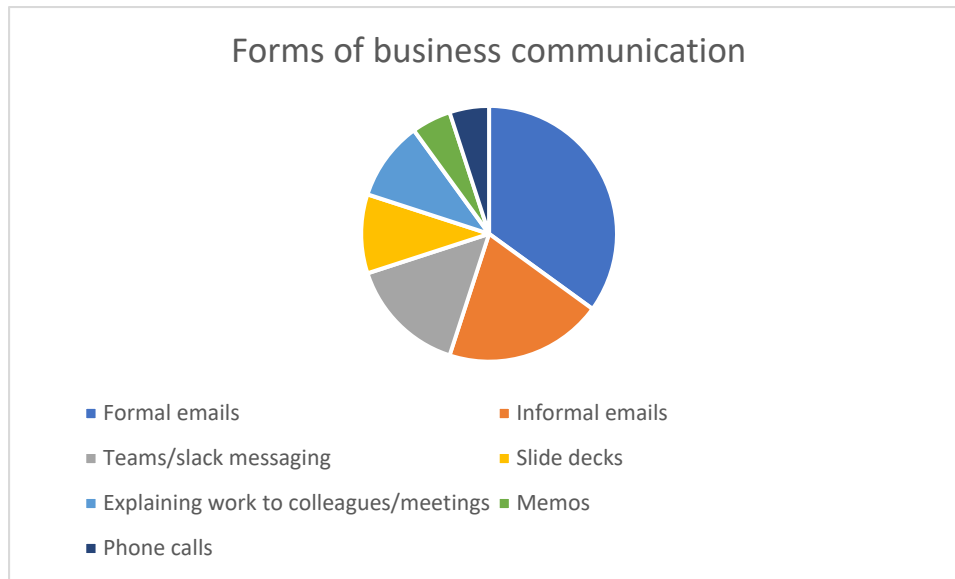


All students who responded to the survey in 2021 said that their degree from the ECBU department did facilitate their effective communication. The respondents were evenly split between high and moderate degree. No students from the past 3 years have felt that their degree did not help their communication skills. Students in 2019 were the most positive, with 7 responding “to a high degree” and only 1 “to a moderate degree”. As we were remote for the fall of the 20-21 academic year and hybrid for the Spring, it is possible that COVID is still impacting these numbers. While we will continue to keep an eye on this to see whether this is a significant change, COVID related, or just noisy data, the department did not see cause for concern in these numbers.

Alumni survey

Given the importance of this learning goal to professional success, our SAP indicates that the indirect assessment for this learning goal is an alumni survey. To facilitate alumni communication, the department maintains a LinkedIn group for alumni of the department. The Senior dinner RSVP survey gives a link to the group and asks the students whether they have joined. The group current has 172 members. As of this report, 24 alumni have responded to the survey. The majority graduated within the last 5 years, but some respondents graduated from 6-20 years ago. Interestingly, 50% of respondents felt that the department aided their communication to a high degree, and 50% to a moderate degree. This mirrors the results from the senior survey.

We asked alumni what forms of communication are most heavily used/important in their work.



Unsurprisingly, email was mentioned by almost every respondent. When asked how the department could have been more effective in promoting communication skills, we got many useful comments. The most frequent response was more presentations and more group work. A selection of comments is below:

Written communication I believe was fine - oral you could push for more projects where a person has to present in front of the room. I believe that if you are able to explain to a room a subject and your classmates gain a better understanding of the subject then you have mastered your craft. I think this is something that comes up daily in the workplace - being able to represent your knowledge to a group of people.

Communicate that fluff/ length in writing is not as important as the effectiveness in what you are saying. Being able to communicate effectively in a few short sentences is a skill that isn't always learned through education.

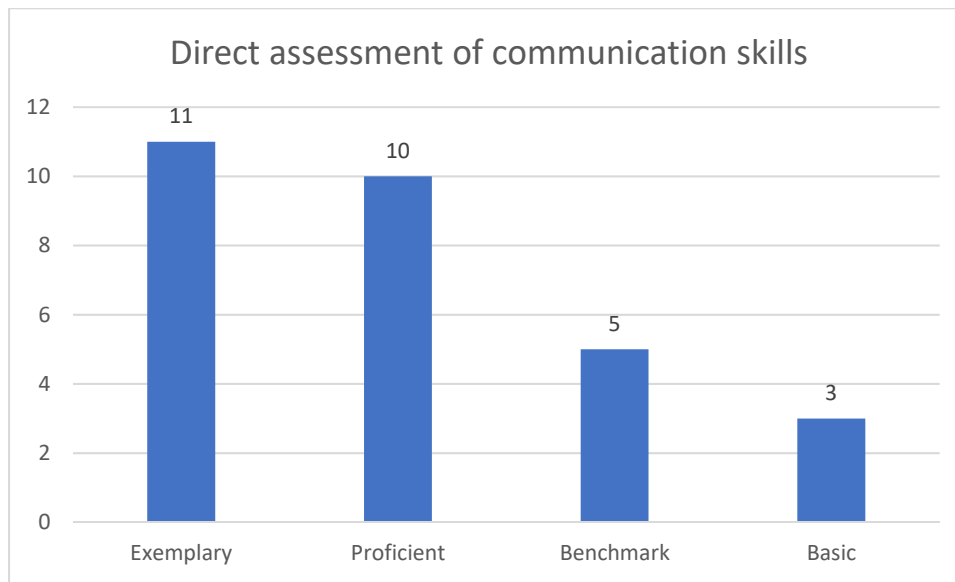
I think that an increased focus on business cases and presenting/ effective slide deck building would be greatly beneficial. This may be consulting specific but much of what I'm asked to do is communicating in various methods such as PPTs or oral presentations

More discussion-style presentations that simulate a meeting with client personnel (ie. a person is charged with being the 'leader' of the meeting and then the rest of the group is charged with creating discussion-style questions). Not necessarily formal, but professionally making small talk then getting into the meat and potatoes of the discussion and efficiently communicating, then ending the meeting.

Assignments requiring students to generate a short (email appropriate length) summary of a topic or research would be beneficial. This would also be useful in presentation format (10 minutes or less). When communicating to management and above, they expect only the important information to be relayed and communicated very efficiently. The challenge as the communicator is learning how to filter down the information without leaving out any pieces needed to understand.

The department will discuss this feedback and how we can add it to our courses through individual assignments during department meetings in 22-22.

Direct assessment



Discussion

Department members saw a noticeable improvement in readability of papers. The department had previously focused on mechanics, everyone agreed that writing and content was improved overall. Members of the department noted an issue with students following the directions in the assignment. We plan to workshop assignments/instructions during a retreat before classes and follow up with discussion throughout the fall semester.

Department members agreed that while oral presentation skills were good, students were not skilled at creating slide decks. We discussed how they see our slides that we have created for teaching and assume that the same style should translate to presentations. Given the alumni feedback, we will put a focus on slide deck creation and how your slides supplement your presentation. We discussed doing a model presentation that shows the difference between slides for presenting and slides for teaching.

Other information:

72% of our graduating seniors completed internships while at Hendrix. The department highly recommends internship completion, so we were pleased to see this number.

Of our respondents, about a third planned to attend graduate school and had been accepted. Law school, MS in Finance, MS in Sports Management, and MA in accounting were the degrees represented. About 31% of the students plan to attend graduate school but were still applying/selecting at the time of the survey. The remaining third planned to work and were still applying, taking internships, etc.

To follow up on last year's assessment

Our data suggested that requiring MATH 120 was not helpful for our majors, so we removed the requirement. We are in a transition period where some students had it as a requirement and others did not. In our senior survey, we asked students how useful a list of classes was in their development. The results suggest that many students who took MATH 120 did not find value in it. We will continue to monitor the transition.

MATH 120 Functions and Models or its equivalent

