

## **The ETS Major Field Test in Business: Are We Adding Value?**

For years, even before the Monfort College of Business (MCB) at the University of Northern Colorado pursued the Baldrige award, MCB has used the ETS major field test (ETSB) in business to inform curriculum changes and even to externally promote the quality of its offerings. MCB can point to multiple examples of either curricular or instructional decisions made as a result of aggregate ETSB performance. Moreover, the sustained improvement in ETSB scores in the aggregate and in each discipline surely played a role in MCB being recognized with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Implicit in that recognition was that the college was somehow “adding value” to its students through its business programs. It is this latter question that is the purpose of this study.

AACSB and other higher education accrediting bodies have been actively promoting assurance of learning (AOL) for many years. Standardized tests such as the ETSB represent one way of attempting to measure student learning. The goal of this study is two-fold. First, at least two other studies (Bycio & Allen, 2007 and Mason, Coleman, Steagall, Gallo, and Fabritius, 2011) have examined the determinants of success on the ETSB. Mason, et al. develop a model they argue shows that ETSB outcomes are highly predictable – in sample and for one particular university. Bycio & Allen also find a strong correlation with ACT/SAT scores, but they note a shortcoming of their study is that it only includes students from a single university. Hence, the first goal of this study is to replicate applicable portions of these studies with MCB data. This replication will extend on the aforementioned studies as our data is expected to cover at least a decade.

The premise of the second part of this study is that MCB adds value for its students. The second goal of this study is to attempt to quantify the value-added to our students by looking at their performance on ACT/SAT standardized exams and on the ETSB standardized exam. The percentiles of these exams will not be directly comparable, as the populations are obviously different. If there is a high correlation between ACT/SAT scores and ETSB scores, it would seem to suggest, while based on different domains, the tests largely identify similar characteristics in the population. Thus, following from the first goal, using our ETSB data, we hope to identify a value-added dimension through our MCB programs. In keeping with the objectives of AOL, this aspect can better provide colleges and universities the opportunity to better evaluate what value they add to their students through their respective curriculums.