

SPREADSHEETS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESS SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Spreadsheets are being used since 1970's. From the original digital spreadsheet, *VisiCalc*, to today's Microsoft's *Excel*, which is installed on more than 750 million computers worldwide, the basic model has not been changed: tables of cells containing data or formulas. This simple model is one of the reasons of its enduring success. Acquisition of advanced skills and expertise in using spreadsheets are imperative in the education of business professionals. Spreadsheets are ubiquitous in the business world. It is fast becoming, if it is not already, *lingua franca*, or link/vehicular language in the business world; an Excel spreadsheet is often the final deliverable in most business projects. Moreover, the big data is here, and we do have reasonable tools in spreadsheets how to manage it.

After reviewing literature and having discussions with colleagues in other business schools, it became clear that most of us are facing a common problem: spreadsheets are introduced as component MS Office package, MS Excel, in a lower division course; and are used “optionally” (i.e. depending on who is teaching) in various upper division courses. What is needed is a structural change that ensures *spreadsheet practice/use across the curriculum*. To be specific, after an introductory instruction on spreadsheets, which may be in the form of a lower division course, or supervised self-study, followed by a proficiency exam or *Microsoft Certification*; it is imperative that in all other appropriate courses, there should be a structured inclusion of spreadsheet use. Our experiences in identifying such courses and how to include the spreadsheets utilization in those courses in *College of Business in Long Beach State* will be summarized. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to comment on their experiences and share their ideas on this general issue.

Keywords: Spreadsheets, Business Curriculum, MS Excel