

**MBA Strategic Thought Learning Goal - “Our graduates will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate a strategy”**

FACULTY RATER: \_\_\_\_\_

Term/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**DRURY UNIVERSITY MBA- STRATEGIC THOUGHT**

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Fails to meet expectations</i>	<i>Meets expectations</i>	<i>Exceeds expectations</i>
<i>Recognize common business or corporate strategies</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to recognize any aspects of common business strategies as Cost Leadership or Differentiation, and/or corporate strategies such as Diversification, Growth, or Retrenchment	<input type="checkbox"/> Correctly identifies some aspects of common business or corporate strategies, but description is incomplete or includes minor mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely and correctly identifies all relevant business and corporate strategies
<i>Recognize common industry structures and intensity/nature of rivalry</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to recognize any aspects of relevant industry structure such as Oligopoly or Pure Competition, and/or indications of intensity/nature of rivalry (e.g., price wars)	<input type="checkbox"/> Correctly identifies some aspects of the relevant industry structure or indications of intensity/nature of rivalry, but description is incomplete or includes minor mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely and correctly identifies the relevant industry structure and intensity/nature of rivalry
<i>Critically evaluate the potential of a particular strategy to result in competitive advantage through differentiation, cost leadership, and/or strategic positioning</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to use proper criteria (e.g., valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, non-substitutable) to critically evaluate the potential of a particular strategy to result in competitive advantage through differentiation, cost, and/or strategic positioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to apply one or more criteria to the evaluation of a particular strategy, but evaluation is incomplete or uncritical	<input type="checkbox"/> Completely and persuasively evaluates the potential of a particular strategy to result in competitive advantage through differentiation, cost leadership, and/or strategic positioning

05/02/2014

## **Strategic Thought Learning Goal of the Breech MBA**

“Our graduates will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate a strategy.”

### **Instructions and Assessment Process**

#### Rating Process

The Strategic Thought Learning Goal of the MBA program shall be rated by two faculty members. The two faculty members shall conduct independent ratings and after assessment, reach consensus on any ratings where ratings differed. After consensus is reached, the results of the ratings, and any recommendations for improvement of either courses or the rating instrument shall be presented to the MBA committee for consideration of action by the Breech faculty.

#### Samples of Student Work

The Strategic Thought goal shall be assessed using student responses to an exam question from MBA 673 (Economics of Strategy). Although not part of the formal assessment protocol, pre-assessment data shall be collected in MBA 673 on the question: “Have you ever studied Porter’s Five Forces Model? If so, tell me where/when.”

#### Assessment Assignments

The rubric used to assess this Learning Goal is included as an appendix to these instructions. The course instructions for the test/pre-assessment items (MBA 673) follow:

MBA 673 Students shall study the Nucor case (or another appropriate case) in the Economics of Strategy (MBA 673) course. The students shall respond to a test item framed to prompt discussion of Nucor’s generic strategy, industry context, and HR/organizational practices. In particular, the question should be written to point to the linkages between internal and external aspects of strategy.

The attached rubric should be employed to evaluate student responses to the exam question. The exam case and related questions (attached) should be given to the student near or at the end of the course.

MBA Strategic Thought Goal evaluative case:

NUCOR produces a variety of steel products, many of which are regarded as “commodities.” NUCOR is known for (among other things) its “...cost conscious corporate culture and the ability to achieve low-costs per ton produced.” The company “built state of the art facilities in the most economical fashion possible and then made it standard company practice to invest aggressively in plant modernization... as new cost-saving opportunities emerged.”

The above description sets up the Nucor case, but is not provided to the students – they read the entire case and are provided an extensive list of questions to prepare for the following quiz. The first four questions are on that list, but not the fifth.

- 1) How would you describe the industry in which Nucor operates; it is purely competitive, monopolistic, etc? If it doesn't fit neatly, tell me why.
- 2) How does Nucor compensate its employees (focus on the production line employees). What is the rationale for this system – what is Nucor trying to accomplish?
- 3) What are the three different strategies that we've outlined for "staying ahead of the competition?" Which of these strategies best describe Nucor? (Focus on the one that is the best fit.)
- 4) To what extent do you believe that Nucor's strategy has been dictated by the degree of pricing discretion that Nucor possesses (or does not possess)?
- 5) Do you believe that Nucor has a sustainable competitive advantage? If so, what is the source of that advantage and why do you believe it is sustainable. If not, tell me why not. Give me detail!