

*“To Educate and Prepare Students for
Positions of Responsibility
and Ethical Leadership in Society”*



Richards
College of Business

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

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Who We Are...

The historical, national, local, and other factors that shape our mission and operations.

The University of West Georgia and the Richards College of Business have their roots in the small 4th District Agricultural and Mechanical School commissioned by the Georgia State Legislature in 1906. From this humble beginning, the institution was named West Georgia College in 1933, authorized to grant Bachelor of Science in Education degrees in 1956, and authorized to grant masters degrees in 1967. In 1996, West Georgia College was renamed the State University of West Georgia and its current title, University of West Georgia, was adopted in 2005. Today, the University of West Georgia has become "...a selectively-focused, comprehensive institution providing undergraduate and graduate public higher education in arts and sciences, business, and education, primarily to the people of West Georgia."¹ The University now enrolls more than 10,000 students.

A division of business was first created within the institution in the year 1961. Prior to this, the institution offered courses in accounting, business law, shorthand, and commerce, but neither business nor commerce had a distinct academic identity.² The Institution granted its first MBA degree in 1972. In 1973, during a restructuring process, West Georgia College established a School of Business. With continued growth, the School of Business was elevated to College status in 1973 and received a name and an endowment in memory of the late Roy Richards, Sr. in 1997. The Richards College of Business currently enrolls approximately 1800 undergraduate and 150 graduate students.

"The mission of the Richards College of Business is to educate and prepare students for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in society. The RCOB provides quality business and professional education in a personal environment, built upon a common body of knowledge, and prepares students primarily from the West Georgia and Atlanta areas for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in organizations..."³ Recognizing this regional mission, several state, national and global trends guide our vision for the future.

First, in a stunning report prepared by the Management Education Task Force of AACSB International, task force members identified three critical challenges faced by business schools: a shortage of doctorally qualified faculty, the need to reinsure that current curriculum meets the needs of the global business world, and the need to integrate degree and non-degree education.⁴ Globally, management education is being redirected, rethought, and repackaged. These market conditions will guide our vision for the future.

Second, as a state owned institution, the future of the RCOB is closely linked to the University System of Georgia. As noted in a recent Board of Regents Report, state funding of higher

¹ <http://www.westga.edu/documents/mission.php>

² House, Myron Wade. "West Georgia College: The Early Years." Unpublished manuscript. Annie Belleweaver Special Collections. Irvine Sullivan Ingram Library West Georgia College.

³ <http://www.westga.edu/~busn/mission.htm>

⁴ Management Education at Risk: Report of the Management Education Task Force to the AACSB – International Board of Directors. (2002). AACSB International.

education in Georgia has undergone severe retooling. Between the years 2001 and 2004, due to a challenging economic environment, the state cut the budget for the University System of Georgia by more than \$380,000,000.⁵ This caused a heavy strain on resources within UWG and the RCOB. Although since 2004 some of this funding gap has been recovered, this experience emphasized the need to create unique and effective methods of meeting market demands without relying on an increasing pool of state-funding. Therefore, effective resource allocation will guide our vision for the future.

Third, despite the academic and economic strains in the market, factors within our state and local economy are favorable. According to a Georgia Department of Labor report,⁶ within the state of Georgia there is an anticipated population growth in the traditional student age brackets, there is an anticipated demand for workers with more education to fill more jobs at higher salaries, and general and operations managers are predicted to be among the twenty occupations with the most annual job openings between now and 2012. Additionally, professional and business services are projected to be the second fastest growing of the services sector in Georgia, adding 154,000 jobs by 2012. These demographic and economic factors suggest that our vision for the future must include an ability to meet a large demand in a hypercompetitive market with strained resources.

What we have to offer...

Our relative advantages and disadvantages in reputation, resources, sponsors, and supporters.

Relative Advantages

Based on its unique resource base, the Richards College of Business is in a strong position in the local business school market. A number of these unique resources are directly linked to the RCOB's position as a college within UWG. For example, recently UWG was recognized as one of the 'Best Southeastern Colleges' and 'Best Value' (southeast area) by Princeton Review.⁷ UWG is also becoming more recognized for its "educational excellence in a personal environment."⁸ UWG has recently added a large number of student-oriented facilities (i.e. new student center, large academic building, and new campus apartments). As part of the University System of Georgia, academically qualified students have their tuition waived through the HOPE scholarship program. UWG is one of five schools to participate in the WebMBA program that enrolls students in an accredited online MBA degree program. Also, UWG is located near Atlanta, which is a clear geographic advantage. These unique resources within UWG and the USG enhance the reputation of UWG and in turn enhance the image of the RCOB.

The RCOB has unique resources as well. These include our well qualified faculty, strong degree programs, institutionalized regional outreach, growing international programs, state-of-the-art

⁵ Board of Regents Report. (September, 2004). The University System of Georgia. Why we are where we are.

⁶ Georgia Workforce 2012. A Comprehensive Analysis of Long-term Employment Trends published by the Georgia Department of Labor, Michael L. Thurmond, Commissioner.

⁷ <http://www.princetonreview.com>

⁸ <http://www.westga.edu>

technology, an integrated Small Business Development Center and growing endowments. Each of these is discussed below.

Recently, a faculty driven committee reviewed the evaluation and development policies contained in the RCOB Faculty Handbook. Through this process, the RCOB faculty adopted definitions of academic and professional qualifications for faculty members. As this review process progressed, it became apparent that with few exceptions, faculty members at the RCOB are quality teachers, active researchers and good public servants. Currently, the vast majority of faculty members meet or exceed our definitions of academically or professionally qualified faculty. Additionally, we have reward programs that recognize outstanding faculty in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Recently we added to these rewards a Faculty Scholar program that supports faculty research projects with a \$5,000 grant. Our ability to maintain and support productive faculty members is a strong advantage of the RCOB.

The Richards College of Business offers undergraduate degrees as follows: a BBA with majors in Economics, Finance, Management, Marketing, Real Estate, Management Information Systems, and Accounting; a BA in International Affairs; and, in conjunction with the College of Education, a BSEd in Business Education and a BS in Economics with Secondary Education Certification. Unique strengths of these degree programs include our BBA in Real Estate that is one of only three undergraduate real estate degree programs in Georgia, and a recent addition of an International Certificate which is now available to all RCOB undergraduate majors who meet certain requirements.

On the graduate level the RCOB offers the following: an MBA; MPAcc; in conjunction with four other USG institutions, a WebMBA; and, in conjunction with the College of Education, an MEd in Business Education, and an EdS in Business Education. Our graduate programs are targeted toward working professionals who pursue their graduate education in the evening. Their affordability and flexibility are unique advantages for the RCOB in this regional area.

Each year the Department of Economics hosts an Economic Forecasting Breakfast. This event has become well known in the region and annually attracts more than 350 people from the community. At each event a well known economist speaks on national and global economic issues and a regional economist addresses regional economic issues. Additionally, each year the Department of Economics publishes the “West Georgia Regional Outlook” which serves as a resource to the business community regarding economic conditions in the area. This regional outreach event is a unique resource to the RCOB.

The RCOB supports two annual international experiences for students. The International Finance and Economics Program is in its 17th year, and the International Business Summer Studies Program is in its 3rd year. Both of these programs are unique to the RCOB and provide an opportunity for students to learn about international business in New York City and London, and Atlanta and London, respectively. These programs have had a profound impact on our students’ exposure to international business and other cultures.

Our resources in technology include state-of-the-art technology for use in research and in the classroom. We have adopted a systematic four-year cycle to replace all computers and maintain

several student computer labs. All classrooms are wired with a multimedia teaching station and projection system. UWG has a Learning Resource Center that supports additional technology needs of professors or students.

The RCOB houses a federally funded Small Business Development Center. While this is not unique to the RCOB (there are seven such agreements within the state of Georgia), our Small Business Development Center shares a building with the RCOB and regularly brings individuals from the business community into our environment. This is a unique opportunity to merge the business community and our academic institution.

Other unique resources include the two endowments that benefit the RCOB. These endowments significantly add to the operating capital of the RCOB. The Richards endowment injects thousands of dollars annually into the budget of the RCOB. The RCOB Visionary Endowment was established in 2005. The target for this endowment is \$500,000 within five years. It has already received donations or commitments totaling more than \$100,000. These endowments are a unique resource to the RCOB and provide us with a unique financial advantage.

Relative Disadvantages

Growth is an advantage, but it can also be a detriment. As a result of growth, our faculty to student ratio is increasing, even in upper division courses. This increase could impact our “Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment.” To effectively manage the growth, we requested ten new faculty lines. Two of these requested positions were funded last year; and we expect the additional eight lines to be funded within the next five years. If funded, these new positions will allow us to reinsure our commitment to quality faculty/student interactions for some time in the future.

Also, as we have grown, it has become necessary for the RCOB to acquire new office space. While this is a good thing, the RCOB is now housed in two separate buildings. This decreases faculty and student interaction and hampers the collegiality among faculty. This is a disadvantage, as one of our strengths in the past has been cross-collaboration and unity among the faculty.

Finally, in a recent Board of Visitors meeting it was noted that we have a good product. Our faculty and degree programs are strong, yet the RCOB is not as well known as several other sectors of the University. UWG has a nationally recognized Debate Team and a large, well recognized College of Education. This recognition, while an advantage to UWG, has made it more difficult for the RCOB to receive the name recognition for our business majors. Future marketing efforts need to focus on building the name recognition of the RCOB and selling the quality of our degree programs.

How we compete...

The internal, environmental, and competitive forces that we face.

The national and local trends noted above largely shape our competitive constraints. Like many other schools, we face challenges in attracting academically qualified faculty members, keeping our curriculum up to date to meet the demands of a global economy, and competing with online and alternative degree programs. And yet we are also forced to compete in this arena with a relatively smaller budget.

However, we do compete in a region that is favorable for business schools. It is anticipated that we will have an increase in the total student age population within the next decade as well as an increase in the number of jobs available to graduates⁹. These trends alleviate some of the competitive pressure among degree granting institutions.

Notwithstanding, recent moves by several competing institutions do threaten the geographic area that has traditionally been our domain. Mercer University opened a campus in Douglasville in which they offer a BBA degree, and the University of Georgia entered the Atlanta MBA market, potentially drawing more of our prospective graduate students there. Also, a number of smaller local schools have added an MBA or BBA degree to their night and weekend programs. Indeed, the undergraduate and graduate markets are becoming more saturated. One competitive move we are monitoring closely is the creation of a new College in the University System of Georgia. The Board of Regents has approved the creation of Georgia Gwinnett College. It will be located east of Atlanta and is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2006. This new University System of Georgia Institution will increase the competition for students in the greater Atlanta market.

Additionally, the greatest competitive force is the recent advancement of online learning. With the large number of accredited universities offering degree programs completely online, the competitive market for undergraduate and graduate education is changing. Our ability to find niches within the competitive market for undergraduate and graduate education, as well as our ability to find and maintain a stronger online presence, may largely determine our ability to grow in the future.

The RCOB has in place a systematic process for strategically planning how we will build on our advantages, overcome our disadvantages, and compete in the future. Our vision and mission guide this process, and stakeholders are consulted at each step. Through this process, the RCOB has identified strategic goals and specific action items we will achieve within the next five years. These are narrated in the sections below.

⁹ Georgia Workforce 2012. A Comprehensive Analysis of Long-term Employment Trends published by the Georgia Department of Labor, Michael L. Thurmond, Commissioner.

Strategic Planning Process

The Richards College of Business is committed to systematic and inclusive strategic planning. During Fall Semester 2005, the RCOB Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the RCOB strategic planning process. In doing so, the committee detailed each step of the process and the responsible entity. Additionally, the assurance of learning process for the RCOB was integrated into the process to avoid fractionalized decision making. The process and responsibilities for each semester are as follows:

Fall Semester

1. Dean's Office
 - a. Review progress of the annual strategic action items (Present at the fall faculty meeting)
 - b. Contact alumni to build relationships (i.e. survey, college update)
 - c. Prepare for, conduct, and report on Board of Visitors meeting
 - d. Prepare a summary of the advising survey and disseminate it to the faculty and advisors
2. Departments
 - a. Conduct student exit interviews. (Department representatives should report findings [from the chair] to the Strategic Planning Committee)
 - b. Discuss strategic issues relevant to the department. (Department representatives should report this discussion to the Strategic Planning Committee)
 - c. Submit budget requests to the Dean's Office
 - d. Assist with the collection of assurance of learning data as requested by the Assistant/Associate Deans
 - e. Administer advising survey
 - f. Update learning objectives within core courses as needed
3. Faculty Committees
 - a. Strategic Planning Committee
 - i. Review progress on annual action items
 - ii. Recommend action items to the DAC for the following year
 - iii. At least every fifth year, review and update mission, vision, statement of ethical expectations
 - b. Programs Committees (Undergraduate and Graduate)
 - i. Review assurance of learning assessments from Spring and Summer semesters, complete report and make recommendations as needed

- ii. Recommend assurance of learning embedded assessments for the following Fall semester
- iii. At least every fifth year, review and update degree program learning goals

Spring Semester

1. Dean's Office

- a. Prepare annual report for the Richards College of Business
- b. Review the progress on our annual action items (Report at the end of year faculty meeting)
- c. Finalize annual action items for the upcoming year (Review annual action items for the following year)
- d. Prepare for, conduct, and report on Board of Visitors meeting

2. Departments

- a. Conduct student exit interviews (Department representatives should report findings [from the chair] to the Strategic Planning Committee)
- b. Discuss strategic issues relevant to the department (Department representatives should report this discussion to the Strategic Planning Committee)
- c. Prepare annual data report for Institutional Research and Planning
- d. Prepare department annual report
- e. Assist with assurance of learning data collection

3. Faculty Committees

- a. Strategic Planning Committee
 - i. Review progress on annual action items, send report to the Dean's Office
 - ii. Discuss future action items
- b. Program Committees (Undergraduate and Graduate)
 - i. Review assurance of learning assessments from Fall semester, complete report, and make recommendations as needed
 - ii. Recommend assurance of learning embedded assessments for next Spring and Summer semesters

RCOB Action Items to be Accomplished Within Five Years

As an outcome of our strategic planning process, the RCOB has adopted specific action items to accomplish within the next five years. This section outlines those action items. Each strategic action item listed is tied to one of the RCOB strategic goals.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Richards College of Business is to educate and prepare students for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in society.

The RCOB provides quality business and professional education in a personal environment, built upon a common body of knowledge, and prepares students primarily from the West Georgia and Atlanta areas for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in organizations by:

Strategic Goal 1: Admitting quality local, regional, national, and international students and providing them with an educational experience that will prepare them to achieve future career excellence.

Action Items:

- Complete faculty and external review of our processes to evaluate our compliance with AACSB International standards
- Establish a process to pre-admit top BBA students into the MBA program
- Establish a Mentorship program for students employing the resources of the RCOB and its Alumni
- Improve our processes to help students transition from school to work
- Revisit admission processes for RCOB

Strategic Goal 2: Providing students with dynamic and up-to-date bachelor and masters level curricula that are supported by an innovative technological base.

Action Items:

- Complete implementation of the assurance of learning process across all degree programs
- Complete implementation of the assurance of learning process within majors
- Review the MBA curriculum and prerequisites
- Add focus areas to the MBA degree which build on unique market niches

Strategic Goal 3: Providing a solid business foundation for our students to compete successfully in a work environment, engage in lifelong learning opportunities, and apply high standards of ethical conduct.

Action Items:

- Establish a consistent student internship process for the Richards College of Business
- Review our strategy regarding faculty to student ratio

Strategic Goal 4: Recruiting high quality faculty and staff and providing them with sufficient resources to support excellence in teaching, primarily applied and pedagogical research, and service.

Action Items:

- Faculty committees complete the review of the Faculty Handbook for the RCOB including the definitions of academically and professionally qualified faculty
- Implement the RCOB Faculty Scholars program
- Reengineer our new faculty orientation and efforts to mentor new faculty
- Review the process of faculty evaluation with regard to research, teaching and service
- Review the Mission Statement with regard to research

Strategic Goal 5: Building internal and external partnerships that will create value for all parties.

Action Items:

- Establish the RCOB Visionary Endowment
- Establish a Center for Business and Economic Research
- Expand the Center for Economic Education

Financial Strategies to Support the Five-Year Action Items

Financial Support for Strategic Action Items 2005-2010

Action Item	Start Date	Cost /Revenue	Residual Annual Cost	Source/Disposition of Funds
Hire ten new faculty over the next five years	Annual start dates	TBD	Annual increases	VPAA
Staff and build pre-major advising center	Fall 2005	\$40,000	Annual increases	President's Strategic Allocation
Increase funding for graduate assistantships	Fall 2005	\$60,000	\$60,000	Shift of Internal Funds
Develop faculty research grant	Fall 2005 and Spring 2006	\$5,000	\$5,000	Stone and Richards Endowments
Initiate grant for Stone Endowment for Entrepreneurial Studies	Fall 2005	\$750	\$1,000	Stone Endowment
Develop strategic alliances with additional software providers	Spring 2006 or Fall 2006	\$5,000	\$2,500	Dean's Discretionary Fund
Classroom technology enhancements - two classrooms per year for the next four years	Summer 2006 or Fall 2006	\$8,000 annually	\$8,000	Richards Endowment
Classroom computer replacements	Annual	\$ 4,500 annually	\$ 4,500	Student Technology Fees
Faculty/staff computer replacements	Annual	\$16,500 annually	\$16,500	WebMBA Funds
Classroom LCD Projector replacements - two per year for the next four years	Summer 2006	\$6,000	\$6,000	Student Technology Fees

Reconfigure existing space to facilitate new faculty offices and MIS Project Room	December 2006	\$10,000	--	Richards Endowment & End of Year Funds
Develop Center for Business & Economic Research: 10% supplement for director; 10% summer supplement; 2 course release for director; ½ time graduate student; start up travel and misc. expenses	Fall 2006	\$30,000	(\$15,000) from Grants and Projects \$15,000 continuing costs	Economics Discretionary Fund and Shift of Internal College Funds
Expand Center for Economics Education: 10% supplement for director; 1 course release for director; ½ time graduate student; start up travel and misc. expenses	Fall 2006	\$15,000	(\$5,000) from Grants and Projects \$10,000 continuing costs	Economics Discretionary Fund, Shift of Internal College Funds, and Georgia Center for Economics Education Grant

Richards College of Business - Strategic Plan Action Timeline 2005-2010

RCOB Vision Statement: The Richards College of Business will be recognized as a source of quality graduates and business expertise, primarily in the West Georgia and Atlanta areas, by providing an educational environment where excellence is pursued in endeavors and ethical behavior is reflected in activities.

Mission	Strategic Goals	Action Items 05-06	Action Items 06-07	Action Items 07-08	Action Items 08-09	Action Items 09-10	
<p>RCOB Mission Statement: The mission of the Richards College of Business is to educate and prepare students for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in society. The RCOB provides quality business and professional education in a personal environment, built upon a common body of knowledge, and prepares students primarily from the West Georgia and Atlanta areas for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in organizations by:</p>	<p><i>Admitting quality local, regional, national, and International students and providing them with an educational experience that will prepare them to achieve future career excellence.</i></p>	<p>Complete faculty and external review of our Processes to evaluate our compliance with AACSB International standards</p>	<p>Establish a Mentorship program for students employing the resources of the RCOB and its Alumni</p>	<p>Improve our processes to help students transition from school to work</p>	<p>Revisit admission processes for RCOB</p>		
	<p><i>Providing students with dynamic and up-to-date bachelor and master level curricula that are supported by an innovative technological base.</i></p>	<p>Complete implementation of the assurance of learning process across degree programs</p>	<p>Complete the implementation of assurance of learning process within majors</p> <p>Review the MBA curriculum and Prerequisites</p>	<p>Implement Changes based on the assurance of learning process</p>	<p>Implement Changes based on the assurance of learning process</p>	<p>Implement Changes based on the assurance of learning process</p>	
	<p><i>Providing a solid business foundation for our students to compete successfully in a work environment, engage in lifelong learning opportunities, and apply high standards of ethical conduct.</i></p>		<p>Establish a consistent student internship process for the Richards College of Business</p>	<p>Review our strategy regarding faculty to student ratio</p>			
	<p><i>Recruiting high quality faculty and staff and providing them with sufficient resources to support excellence in teaching, primarily applied and pedagogical research, and service.</i></p>	<p>Faculty Committees Complete the Review of the Faculty Handbook for the RCOB</p> <p>Implement the RCOB Faculty Scholars Program</p>	<p>Reengineer our new faculty orientation and efforts to mentor new faculty</p>	<p>Review the process of faculty evaluation with regard to research, teaching and service</p>	<p>Review Mission Statement with regard to research</p>		
	<p><i>Building internal and external partnerships that will create value for all parties</i></p>	<p>Establish the RCOB Visionary Endowment</p>	<p>Establish a Center for Business and Economic Research</p> <p>Expand the Center for Economic Education</p>				

Success Measurements: Student Credit Hours, Number of Faculty, Faculty Sufficiency Measures

**RICHARDS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ACCREDITATION MAINTENANCE REPORT
Academic Year 2003 – 2004**

Introduction

As noted in its 2003 – 2008 Strategic Management Plan, the RCOB focused on six strategic objectives during the 2003 – 2004 academic year. In addition, the RCOB faculty and administration dedicated time and financial resources to ensure that the new AACSB International accreditation processes were considered in updating the strategic plan and its annual action items. Finally, much effort was expended to bring clarity to the RCOB mission and associated statements (i.e., vision, ethical expectations, and strategic goals).

The following sections provide a summary of the action items completed for each of the six strategic objectives. The final section describes the action items that will have priority in the 2004 – 2005 academic year.

I. Progress on the Six Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1 – Focus on Professional Education:

Given that both the UWG and the RCOB promote educational excellence in a personal environment, it is imperative that faculty resources are used efficiently and effectively. To better promote faculty – student interaction, faculty assistance in student learning, and faculty led student research at the undergraduate level, four (4) new full-time, non-tenure track faculty members were hired (two starting in 2003 – 2004 and two in 2004 – 2005). These additional full time faculty members will also reduce the use of supporting (part-time) faculty by the RCOB. In addition, a mandatory minimum of a 2.00 GPA was required for students to enroll in two accounting, two economics, the legal environment, and the computer applications classes (Core Area F courses). In this manner we ensured that those students majoring in business had both the ability and the discipline to complete their chosen studies.

Finally, work place ethics and diversity perspectives were introduced to students in their core classes and through the use of the Executive in Residence and Executive Roundtable programs. Globalization topics were also incorporated in a number of business core classes as well as in the new Management and Marketing program in London and the long running London Finance and Economics program.

Strategic Objective 2 – Expand / Improve Physical Resources:

To accommodate double-digit increases in business majors, the RCOB administration and selected faculty had spent several years in planning sessions and committee work to ensure that the RCOB acquire the use of a second building for classrooms and office space. In June 2004, these efforts bore fruit and the RCOB acquired the use of two-thirds of the space available in Adamson Hall, a new building constructed on the front campus with state of the art technology,

design, and architecture. With this facility, the RCOB has gained office space for 14 faculty and staff, 2 classrooms, 1 lecture hall, 1 computer classroom, and 2 conference rooms. This additional space will help support the RCOB growth in students and faculty and will enhance student learning and faculty research. In addition, classrooms and offices in the existing RCOB building were remodeled and technologically improved.

Strategic Objective 3 – Ensure Continued AACSB International Accreditation:

While focusing on Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 would enhance the RCOB's ability to maintain AACSB International business and accounting accreditation, additional steps were taken to ensure continued AACSB International accreditation. First, financial resources were dedicated for approximately 25% of the RCOB faculty and all RCOB administrators to attend AACSB International workshops and seminars concerning strategic management, learning assurance, accounting accreditation maintenance, general business accreditation maintenance, and other topics. We wanted to ensure that a large pool of key faculty members and administrators existed to support and lead a large scale participation of the RCOB faculty in the AACSB International accreditation maintenance process. A byproduct of this effort was a faculty-led review of the learning goals of all RCOB degree programs and a complete revision of the RCOB mission, vision, and ethical expectation statements by faculty, students, Dean's Advisory Council, and the RCOB Board of Visitors.

Next, an AACSB International Accreditation Director position was created to ensure that a key administrator is continuously focusing RCOB efforts on maintenance of accreditation. Third, a half-time Associate Dean position was created to support the RCOB assurance of learning efforts. This position will be filled in the 2004-2005 academic year. Fourth, six (6) AACSB International accreditation maintenance committees were constituted. Virtually all full-time faculty members of the RCOB are members of at least one of these committees.

Strategic Objective 4 – Obtain Additional Financial Resources:

To support faculty and student travel, research, and professional development needs and to remain competitive in technology and facilities, the RCOB faculty and administrators implemented a Summer teaching plan that placed Summer teaching on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, eliminating both budgetary constraints and guarantees. While the faculty has taken a great risk in giving up the comfort of budgeted salaries, they earned the right of sharing potential profits that they produce if student tuition revenues exceed their salaries. These funds were used to support travel, the acquisition of research data bases, technological improvements, facilities upgrades, and other professional development activities. These financial resources are in addition to those listed under Strategic Objective 1.

Strategic Objective 5 – Inspire and Encourage Faculty:

The faculty teaching, research, service, and innovation awards and staff service awards instituted in 2001 – 2002 continued during the 2003 – 2004 academic year. These awards are a great source of motivation for all involved. In addition, the RCOB focused on obtaining student scholarship resources and it paid large dividends, with more than \$100,000 of contributions raised that will enable us to attract and retain qualified students. Finally, we were successful in convincing the University administration to support our priorities for the 2004 – 2005 fiscal year to recruit high caliber faculty and department chairs, along with personnel to support the

additional faculty hired (e.g., one pre-major advisor and an assistant to the RCOB Technology Director).

Strategic Objective 6 – Continuously Improve External Relations.

Given the condition of the state budget, fund raising and improving external relations with our stakeholders are necessary ongoing activities. During the 2003 – 2004 academic year we continued to receive funds from existing relationships and created new ones. *Friends of Fred Scholarships* came online, along with several new general scholarships dedicated to RCOB students. In addition, we developed several new relationships with Atlanta and London businesses through our new study abroad program in Marketing and Management. Also, we continued to use our Executive in Residence and Executive Roundtable programs to establish contacts with Atlanta area businesses. Finally, we used our contacts in the RCOB Board of Visitors to develop opportunities for our faculty and students in internships, case development, and applied research.

II. Priority action items for the 2004-2005 academic year.

Introduction

In the summer of 2004, the Richards College of Business Dean’s Advisory Council reviewed the strategic plan. To further focus our efforts, the council adopted five strategic goals. These goals and the highest priority action items for the 2004 – 2005 academic year are listed below.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 1 – Attract and Retain Qualified Students

The RCOB will ensure that students meet class prerequisites, minimum grade point average requirements, and other academic standards before being allowed to enroll in College of Business courses. RCOB departments will continue to maintain quality degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Through outreach and advising, the RCOB will continue to attract and retain quality students.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 2 – Provide Students with Dynamic and Up-to-Date Curricula

As noted in Section II above, the RCOB degree programs’ learning goals were revised during the 2003 – 2004 academic year. The AACSB International Committee on Learning Assurance, the Dean’s Advisory Council, the Associate Dean, chairs, and faculty will ensure that all course learning objectives reflect and support the degree program learning goals. In addition, chairs will ensure that all websites, catalogs, and appropriate documents are updated and revised to reflect the new learning goals. The assessment program for the RCOB degree programs will be redesigned during Fall 2004 to assure its compliance with AACSB International standards. Redesigned assessment will be implemented and data collected during Spring 2005. Finally, faculty will be encouraged to participate in curriculum innovation activities and will be supported by financial and other means.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 3 – Prepare Students for Academic and Career Success

The expectation of the RCOB faculty is that graduates of degree programs will have attained basic business skills and knowledge as a foundation for lifelong success. RCOB ethical expectations, mission, and vision were developed/revised during 2003-04 and approved in Spring 2004 through the efforts of faculty, students, unit leaders, and external stakeholders (Board of Visitors and Community leaders). In addition, a set of procedures, processes, and activities were developed to ensure that the content and spirit of these statements were widely disseminated among the RCOB constituents, with implementation slated for Fall 2004. RCOB faculty and staff will also continue to work closely with Career Services in helping place students in internships, cooperative positions, and in jobs after graduation.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 4 – Maintain Well Qualified and Productive Faculty and Staff

The RCOB will continue its efforts to recruit outstanding staff and faculty and to acknowledge and reward achievements of current faculty and staff. Within budget constraints, the RCOB will actively support professional development activities. Also, based on the recommendation of the RCOB AACSB International Participants Committee, the RCOB Faculty Development Policies document will be revised during the 2004 – 05 academic year.

With positive changes in the RCOB, the University administration recognized our need for additional funds. Accordingly, funds were provided to fill chair positions in Accounting, and Management Information Systems, a new full-time, tenure track faculty position in Accounting, along with the funds to hire a permanent Dean, a pre-major advisor, and an assistant to the Technology Director to support increased faculty, students, and facilities needs. Thus, the 2004 – 2005 academic year will be a pivotal one for the RCOB in completing its leadership, faculty, and staff complements.

In addition, as noted in our “Request for AACSB International Business Accreditation Maintenance Review for 2006 – 2007” document, the RCOB is committed to improving its recruitment of female and minority faculty. While we have a diverse and global student body, our efforts to achieve diversity in our faculty must continue.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 5 – Maintain AACSB International Accreditation

The focus of accreditation activities for the 2004 – 2005 academic year will be as follows: first, each of the AACSB International committees will complete their work in evaluating our compliance with each of the AACSB International standards. Second, the Associate Dean and AACSB International accreditation Director will work with these committees to identify and rectify any discrepancies. Finally, the Dean’s office will fund travel for faculty and administrators to AACSB International seminars and conferences in an effort to increase our knowledge of AACSB International processes. Finally, the Richards College of Business will seek outside review of our compliance with AACSB International standards.

AACSB International Maintenance of Accreditation Progress Report Academic Year 2004-2005

Introduction

This report reviews the progress and the continuous improvements successes of the Richards College of Business (RCOB) throughout the 2004 – 2005 academic year. It contains two sections. **Section I** reviews the progress on actions items related to each of the five strategic goals. Highlights from this section include the progress of the faculty-driven committees charged with evaluating our compliance with the AACSB International standards, acquiring new faculty positions to keep up with increasing enrollment, and adding administrative support to direct assurance of learning and accreditation activities. **Section II** introduces the scheduled strategic action items for the 2005 – 2006 academic year.

Section I: Progress on Strategic Goals

As noted in the Annual Maintenance Report for the academic year 2003 – 2004, the strategic plan was revised in an effort to focus quality improvement efforts and financial resources toward achieving five strategic goals. Each of the strategic goals is listed below with a summary of selected actions completed throughout the 2004 – 2005 academic year.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 1 – Attract and Retain Qualified Students

In addition to our annually recurring processes to recruit and retain students (e.g. attendance at Preview Days, Festival of Majors, and the regular distribution of recruitment material, faculty advising of students), this year the RCOB successfully implemented the following action items:

1. We revised the RCOB web site to increase its appeal to students and improve information flow to stakeholders. The new web site also enhanced students' access to more information about degree programs, admission requirements, and advising processes.
2. In an effort to assist pre-majors with their preparation for and transition into the major courses, a pre-major advisor (Kathryn Brantley) was hired. She will be dedicated to helping pre-major students prepare for academic success in their junior and senior years. Additionally, she helped enforce the new GPA requirements adopted for our Core area F courses.
3. During their regularly scheduled meeting, the members of the Board of Visitors were able to visit with student groups. This allowed Board members to become familiar with our internal processes from a student's perspective so that their recommendations for improvement could be more clearly directed. This was well accepted by students and Board members. It is a practice that will continue. Additionally, in an effort to create strong alumni relationships with new graduates, we began the tradition of giving graduation gifts to students.
4. Finally, for some time graduate assistantships have been made available to students from money "left over" after other budget items were covered. To date we have been unable to

predict how much money will be available and how many assistantships we could offer. Funding for graduate assistantships has been made a line item on the RCOB budget and can now be used as a recruitment tool for graduate students.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 2 – Provide Students with Dynamic and Up-to-Date Curricula

1. All RCOB degree programs' learning goals were revised during the 2003 – 2004 academic year and adopted in Spring 2005. The curriculum improvements throughout this year include creating and adopting standard learning objectives across all of our pre-major (core area F) and BBA major courses. This was a critical incremental step in our ability to implement a high quality and efficient assurance of learning process. Each graduate program generally offers one section of each course per academic year; consequently, aligning learning objectives across separate sections was not needed. The work of the Assurance of Learning Committee regarding their well-crafted, systematic assurance of learning program is summarized in the discussion on committee work below (under Strategic Goal 5). Additionally, Kathryn Martell was invited to our campus to meet with the faculty and inspect our assurance of learning process and learning goals. This meeting was very supportive and helpful in our efforts to improve our curriculum.
2. Two ad-hoc committees were initiated to assess the quality of our undergraduate and graduate core curriculum. This evaluation will be a long term initiative; however, this year both committees completed a benchmark analysis of the curriculum of our peer institutions. This analysis and the outcomes will be discussed and implementation started during the 2005 – 2006 academic year.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 3 – Prepare Students for Academic and Career Success

1. The focus of our efforts toward meeting this strategic objective for the 2004-2005 academic year were closely linked to Strategic Objectives 2 and 5. As part of the assurance of learning process and curriculum analysis, committees will review the core curriculum of each degree program and assess how well we are preparing students for academic and career success. Progress of the committees is summarized below (Strategic Objective 5). Additionally, the RCOB newly revised ethical expectations, mission, and vision were disseminated to students through catalogs, business card size pamphlets, and through the Internet. This increased the awareness of our efforts to help students focus their efforts to prepare for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in society.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 4 – Maintain Well Qualified and Productive Faculty and Staff

1. The evaluation of faculty is a critical and essential element of maintaining a well qualified and productive faculty. As recommended by the Participants Standards Committee, the RCOB began the process of reviewing the Faculty Development Policies. As this review is of great interest to many stakeholders, the systematic and comprehensive review process was

not complete this year. However, it is anticipated that the review will be complete and prepared for a faculty vote by the December, 2005 faculty meeting.

2. Using additional funds provided by the university, the following positions were filled during the 2004 – 2005 year: Dean (Dr. Faye McIntyre), Assistant Technology Director (Mr. Troy Hilley), and Pre-Major Advisor (Ms. Kathrine Brantly). It was decided not to split the Management and Business Systems Department, eliminating the need for the director of management position and the need to hire a new Chair. Additional hires include: permanent department chairs in Management and Business Systems (Dr. Tom Gainey) and Marketing and Real Estate (Dr. Salil Talpade) as well as a half-time Associate Dean (Dr. Ron Best). The search for a department chair for the Accounting and Finance Department is ongoing. While we have a diverse and global student body, our efforts to achieve diversity in our faculty will continue.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 5 – Maintain AACSB International Accreditation

1. In June 2004, the RCOB submitted a formal request for maintenance of accreditation review for the undergraduate and masters degree programs in business and for the undergraduate and masters degree programs in accounting. In October 2004, the RCOB received a letter confirming 1) the degree programs to be included and the degree programs to be excluded from the maintenance of accreditation review, and 2) the approval of the peer, competitive and aspirant groups selected. On July 20, 2005, the Dean received notification that the business and accounting programs are scheduled for maintenance of accreditation review with a team visit scheduled to occur between October 1 and December 15, 2006.
2. During Spring 2005, the RCOB published an AACSB International Accreditation Maintenance Website (http://www.westga.edu/~busn/AACSB_A_M.htm). This site contains committee reports, annual reports, the RCOB Strategic Plan, a listing of learning goals for the BBA, the MBA, and the MPAcc degree programs, and updates on assurance of learning activities. Also, during 2004 – 2005, thirteen (13) faculty/staff registrations to AACSB-I conferences or seminars were funded by the RCOB Dean's office. During the past two years, approximately one-third of the tenure track faculty of the RCOB have attended at least one AACSB International sponsored conference or seminar. In addition, Dr. Kathryn Martell visited campus on March 14, 2005, and conducted two sessions on assurance of learning. A training session for all faculty members was conducted in the morning, and a more in-depth session with the Assurance of Learning Committee was conducted in the afternoon. Feedback from these sessions was useful in helping the RCOB Assurance of Learning Committee refine the BBA, MBA, and MPAcc learning goals and develop the assurance of learning processes.

The following provides a brief summary of RCOB committee activity related to AACSB International Maintenance of Accreditation activities during 2004 – 05 academic year:

Creed/Vision Committee (C1)

This committee spent 2003 – 2004 developing a “Vision Statement” and a “Statement of Ethical Expectations” for the Richards College of Business (RCOB). These statements were approved

by the RCOB faculty on April 2, 2004. During 2004 – 2005, the following actions were accomplished by this committee:

- i) Framed documents containing the mission, vision, and statement of ethical expectations were designed by the committee. These will be placed in selected locations in the College of Business Building and in Adamson Hall in August 2005 (after construction work is completed in the RCOB building);
- ii) The statement of ethical expectations was placed on the desktop of all the computers in the student computer labs;
- iii) Cards containing the statement of ethical expectations were printed up and are available in all departments;
- iv) The mission, vision, and the statement of ethical expectations have all been placed on the RCOB website with the statement of ethical expectations placed on the main RCOB webpage

Eligibility Procedures Committee (C2)

Membership of the Eligibility Procedures Committee coincides with that of the Dean's Advisory Council (DAC). The committee reviewed the activities of the various committees during the year. Examples of specific AACSB International activities include the following:

- a) During August 2004, the DAC (along with members of the Strategic Management Committee) revised the RCOB Strategic Management Plan;
- b) During January 2005, the DAC discussed attendance at AACSB International sponsored conferences and seminars and the RCOB committee structure;
- c) At its April 2005 meeting, the DAC discussed the revised BBA and MBA Learning goals as recommended by the Assurance of Learning Committee;
- d) In August 2005, the DAC will review AACSB International processes and the progress being made toward maintenance of accreditation.

Strategic Management (C3)

This committee met a number of times during Fall 2004 and Spring 2005. During Spring 2005, this faculty-driven committee evaluated the progress of the RCOB in meeting the goals listed in the August 2004 update to the RCOB Strategic Management Plan. The committee submitted a report to the Dean summarizing the committee's review of the strategic plan and recommendations for modifications. Recommendations of the committee include the need to streamline the RCOB committee structure, to initiate a fund raising effort to attract endowed chairs to the RCOB, and to make a more concerted effort to address ethical and global issues. Other comments and recommendations of the committee regarding the RCOB Strategic Plan are listed in the minutes of the committee (available on the RCOB AACSB International accreditation maintenance website).

Participants (C4)

This committee accomplished three main tasks during 2004 – 05. First, the committee completed an initial revision of the RCOB Faculty Development Policies document. This document was last updated in 1998. This revised draft will be discussed by the DAC during meetings in the first part of the Fall 2005 semester. The goal is for a newly revised Faculty Development document to be approved by the RCOB faculty by the end of the Spring 2006 semester. Secondly, this committee updated a summary table on faculty sufficiency by

discipline within the RCOB (Table I). Based on data for 2003 – 04, each department had in excess of 90 percent of students taught by full time participating faculty. Thus, faculty sufficiency within the RCOB easily exceeds the minimum standards established by AACSB International (participating faculty provide 60% of the teaching in each discipline and 75% of the overall college teaching). The third major task of the committee was to update the table summarizing intellectual activities of the RCOB faculty. During meetings in late Summer and Fall 2005, the DAC will review these data. In addition, the specific guidelines as to what constitutes an “academically qualified” faculty member as well as what constitutes a “professionally qualified” faculty member will be proposed.

Assurance of Learning (C5)

The committee began the process of developing a systemic process for assurance of learning. Committee members were very aware of the need to balance faculty freedom and standardization for assurance of learning purposes. During this year the committee: evaluated the consistency of learning objectives across the core courses in each degree program, assigned each learning goal to be assessed within one of these core courses, and began the process of recommending assessment tools within each course. The committee also created subcommittees who will review the undergraduate and graduate assurance of learning processes throughout the Summer of 2005.

Section II: Strategic Action Items for 2005-2006

In the spirit of continuous improvement and in an effort to make our processes more seamless, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Dean’s Advisory Council adjusted the RCOB strategic goals and integrated them into the mission statement of the RCOB. As a result, our scheduled action items for the coming year each support at least one strategic goal within our mission statement. The mission statement is as follows:

“The mission of the Richards College of Business is to educate and prepare students for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in society.

The RCOB provides quality business and professional education in a personal environment, built upon a common body of knowledge, and prepares students primarily from the West Georgia and Atlanta areas for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in organizations by...”

Strategic Goal 1: Admitting quality local, regional, national, and International students and providing them with an educational experience that will prepare them to achieve future career excellence.

Action Item 1: During the 2005 – 2006 academic year, the faculty committees reviewing the RCOB’s compliance with the new AACSB International standards will complete their work. As noted above, each of these committees has made substantial progress in evaluating our compliance with the new standards and correcting deficiencies as they are found. This work will directly influence our ability to attract and admit high quality students and give them the educational experience they deserve.

Strategic Goal 2: Providing students with dynamic and up-to-date bachelor and master level curricula that are supported by an innovative technological base.

Action Item 1: In our efforts to improve our curriculum within the BBA, MBA and MPAcc programs, during the coming year the faculty undergraduate and graduate programs committees will complete the implementation of our systematic assurance of learning process within each degree program. This assurance of learning process will rely heavily on course embedded objectives that are overseen by the respective faculty program committees. Although data has been collected and curriculum adjustments completed, the entire system will be up and running by the end of the coming academic year. Additionally, ad-hoc curriculum committees will complete their review of our curriculum and make recommendations accordingly.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 3: Providing a solid business foundation for our students to compete successfully in a work environment, engage in lifelong learning opportunities, and apply high standards of ethical conduct.

Although our regular efforts to accomplish this goal will continue, no strategic action-items will focus on this goal in the 2005 – 2006 academic year. However, according to our strategic plan, we are scheduled to thoroughly review and update our processes to prepare students to enter the workforce during the 2006 – 2007 academic year.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 4: Recruiting high quality faculty and staff and providing them with sufficient resources to support excellence in teaching, primarily applied and pedagogical research, and service.

Action Item 1: For many years the RCOB has had a written Faculty Development Policy contained in the Faculty Handbook. Within the RCOB, this policy governs faculty evaluation including promotion and tenure. As noted above, with new language in the AACSB International standards requiring evaluation of academic and professional qualifications, it has become necessary for the faculty to review our governance policies. This process is underway and will be complete by the December, 2006, faculty meeting. A review of the process and faculty adoption decisions will be included in the annual maintenance report next year.

Action Item 2: For some time the RCOB has had in place a process to recognize quality research. However, there has been little in the way of supporting high quality research. During the 2005 – 2006 academic year, the RCOB will adopt an RCOB Faculty Scholars Program to support high quality research across the college.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 5: Building internal and external partnerships that will create value for all parties

Action Item 1: In an effort to build relationships with external partnerships, the RCOB will establish the RCOB Visionary Endowment. This endowment is intended to be a constant source for new operating capital within the RCOB. Details about this endowment will be refined during the 2005 – 2006 academic year and fund raising will begin. The target for this endowment is to raise \$500,000 in five years.

**AACSB Annual Maintenance Report
Richards College of Business
Academic Year 2005-2006**

Introduction

This report reviews the progress and the continuous improvements successes of the Richards College of Business (RCOB) through the 2005-2006 academic year. **Section I** provides the mission statement and strategic goals of the RCOB. It also reviews the progress on strategic actions-items related to each of these strategic goals. **Section II** reviews the strategic goals and introduces the actions-items aligned with each goal for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Section I: Strategic Action-Item Updates 2005-2006

“The mission of the Richards College of Business is to educate and prepare students for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in society.

The RCOB provides quality business and professional education in a personal environment, built upon a common body of knowledge, and prepares students primarily from the West Georgia and Atlanta areas for positions of responsibility and ethical leadership in organizations by...”

Strategic Goal 1: Admitting quality local, regional, national, and international students and providing them with an educational experience that will prepare them to achieve future career excellence.

Action Item 1: During the 2005-2006 academic year, the faculty committees charged with reviewing our compliance with AACSB-I standards completed their work. Each committee reported the results of their findings to the RCOB. This thorough and systematic evaluation helped us hone our strategic planning and assurance of learning processes. This evaluation process was a critical element in our ability to provide our students a high quality educational experience. Findings from these committees have been integrated in our college processes and are discussed throughout this report.

Strategic Goal 2: Providing students with dynamic and up-to-date bachelor and master level curricula that are supported by an innovative technological base.

Action Item 1: In our efforts to improve our curriculum within the BBA, MBA and MPAcc programs, the faculty undergraduate and graduate programs committees completed the implementation of our systematic assurance of learning process. Our assurance of learning process relies heavily on course embedded objectives. The curriculum evaluation process is led by faculty programs committees working with the Associate Dean. Data have been collected on all learning goals in all degree programs. The assurance of learning process is implemented and guides our curriculum improvements.

Based on data collected thus far, we have identified specific examples of curriculum improvements and implemented changes in our degree programs. For example, we administered

the ETS Business Exam to a sample of senior business majors. The results suggested that students did not have the command of international management they need. To correct this deficiency, we revised our BBA program to include a required international business course.

The exam results also revealed a slight deficiency in our student's knowledge of ethics. As a result, we changed the title of our "Legal Environment of Business" course to the "Legal and Ethical Environment of Business." Professors teaching this course now include ethics instruction. Additionally, a new text was adopted in this course to reflect the curriculum adjustment and course inclusion. This course is required of all BBA majors.

A course embedded assessment in our business statistics course showed that our students perform well in the area of statistics, but struggle somewhat working with data in spreadsheet format. Further analysis suggested that the rubric used to evaluate student performance may not have provided an accurate assessment. At the recommendation of the committee, the rubric was adjusted and prepared for use in evaluating this assignment in the fall of 2006.

In an introduction to information systems course, we analyzed the completed workbooks of all students in one semester. The results showed that students are largely performing well in most areas, but struggled in spreadsheets and databases. The instructors responsible for designing this course are currently integrating two software packages to improve the instruction in this area.

We also analyzed all of the prior years exit examinations in the MBA program. All students in the MBA are required to complete an extensive four-hour written exam prior to graduation. The analysis of exams and evaluator comments suggests that students need to improve their ability to integrate and analyze business information. To improve our student's ability in this area, we restructured the exit exam question and revised some of the content taught in the strategy capstone seminar. This targets improving students' ability to integrate analysis in a case study. Similar changes have been implemented in our Master of Public Accountancy program.

The above items are a sample of this integrated assurance of learning process. Each learning goal within each degree program is directly assessed. Faculty program committees oversee the curriculum outcomes of each program. As noted above, curriculum and pedagogical changes are made when the assessment results demonstrate a need. Implementing this program has enhanced our curriculum and the outcomes of each of our degree programs.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 3: Providing a solid business foundation for our students to compete successfully in a work environment, engage in lifelong learning opportunities, and apply high standards of ethical conduct.

No specific strategic action-items were identified for this strategic goal this year. However, we continued our efforts to teach ethical behavior and prepare students for the work environment. One item that arose this year in this area is the mentoring program that is an action-item for next year. Toward the end of this year a graduate of our program approached the RCOB about establishing a mentoring program for current students. The idea is to create an online portal that we will use to link interested students with experienced alumni who would be willing to provide career guidance, contacts, and internships.

Although we do a great deal of this informally, a formal process for managing and encouraging these contacts would be a great benefit to current students. It would also strengthen the link between the alumni and the college. Planning for this action-item started this year. The bulk of the planning and implementation will take place in the coming academic year.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 4: Recruiting high quality faculty and staff and providing them with sufficient resources to support excellence in teaching, primarily applied and pedagogical research, and service.

Action Item 1: Through an involved faculty-driven process, we completed the revision of our faculty development policies contained in our faculty handbook. The revised document contains our definition of academic and professional qualifications for faculty as well as minimum criteria for promotion and tenure. The faculty committee completed its draft of the revised handbook and it was accepted by unanimous vote in a December, 2005 faculty meeting.

Action Item 2: This year the RCOB received applications for its first RCOB Scholar. This award is given to a nominee with a strong research record and detailed future research program. This scholar will receive a \$5,000 grant from the RCOB to support future research in the scholar's discipline. Through a competitive selection process, two RCOB Scholar awards are available annually. The first RCOB Scholar will be announced in the fall 2006 faculty meeting.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 5: Building internal and external partnerships that will create value for all parties

Action Item 1: During this year we established the RCOB Visionary Endowment. This ambitious fund raising campaign will increase our total endowments by more than 25%. To date we have received funding or commitment of funds totaling more than \$115,000. We have received commitments from alumni, supporters and students. This ambitious campaign will be an ongoing effort over the next five years and will provide the RCOB with more operating capital for generations to come. We are on track to meet our objective of \$500,000 in five years.

Section II: Strategic Action Items for 2006-2007

During the 2006-2007 academic year, we will focus on achieving the following action-items for our strategic goals.

Strategic Goal 1: Admitting quality local, regional, national, and international students and providing them with an educational experience that will prepare them to achieve future career excellence.

Action Item 1: Recently an alumna approached the RCOB to suggest that we should formalize our mentoring program for students. The suggestion included a systematic way to match students with alumni who are working in their area of study. This suggestion fit well with our strategic goal to provide an educational experience that will help students prepare for future career excellence. In the coming year we will complete this suggestion and formalize a mentorship

program for students. This program will use technology to link a student's area of interest to alumni who are willing to mentor a student through a job shadow experience, site visit, phone conversation, internship, or other career-directed experience. This process has started and the technology development is underway.

Strategic Goal 2: Providing students with dynamic and up-to-date bachelor and master level curricula that are supported by an innovative technological base.

Action Item 1: Over the last several years, faculty committees in the RCOB have reviewed our undergraduate and graduate curriculum in all degree programs. Adjustments have been implemented as this process progressed. However, during this review it was recognized that the competitive landscape for the MBA program has changed drastically in the last several years. With an increase in online, night, weekend, executive, and distance programs, our MBA program needs a fresh approach to be competitive.

This year the Graduate Programs Committee will complete a thorough review of the curriculum of the MBA program. The committee will also review how we package and market the program to a variety of audiences. The intent of this review is to increase student outcomes (including employment), increase enrollments, and increase access. Our current program's strengths are course scheduling (night classes), affordability, and flexibility (full-time and part-time options). This review will be accomplished by the Graduate Programs Committee. This committee includes representatives from each department within the RCOB.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 3: Providing a solid business foundation for our students to compete successfully in a work environment, engage in lifelong learning opportunities, and apply high standards of ethical conduct.

Action Item 1: The RCOB values practical experience as well as classroom instruction. For many years students have been encouraged to participate in internships with local businesses. To date the RCOB has used an informal process of matching perspective interns with local companies. However, the informal process of matching students with local businesses needs support and increased efficiency. For this reason, the RCOB intends to adopt a more formal method of encouraging and managing student internships. This should lead to more contact between the RCOB, local businesses and students. We will study, analyze and implement an internship process during the 2006-2007 academic year.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 4: Recruiting high quality faculty and staff and providing them with sufficient resources to support excellence in teaching, primarily applied and pedagogical research, and service.

Action Item 1: As part of the orientation to the University of West Georgia, new members of the faculty are introduced to the university-wide support available to them. Additionally, the RCOB has had an online orientation for new faculty. In this online orientation, new faculty members view a PowerPoint presentation that outlines who people are and what resources are available to them. This year the RCOB will schedule a formal orientation for new faculty members. We will also test a new faculty mentoring program in the Department of Management. This program will

assign two experienced faculty to each new member of the faculty. The experienced faculty will be responsible for regularly meeting with the new faculty member and helping them integrate into our cohesive and congenial culture. Informal orientation will continue. Additionally, the Dean will begin the tradition of a regularly scheduled lunch with each department each semester.

Action Items for Strategic Goal 5: Building internal and external partnerships that will create value for all parties

Action Item 1: The Department of Economics has served as the host for the Economic Forecasting Breakfast since 1997. This business-oriented event has grown to host more than 350 people annually. Each year one speaker presents information on the economy in the West Georgia area and a second speaker, a well known economist, addresses the state of the nation's economy. This event is well recognized and respected throughout the region. In addition to the breakfast, the Department of Economics publishes an annual West Georgia Regional Outlook which contains information on the regional economy.

In order to further develop the impact of this highly acclaimed program, this year we will create a Center for Business and Economic Research. The Center will serve as the unit responsible for the forecasting breakfast and the West Georgia Regional Outlook and will serve as a catalyst for economic forecasting in the area. The Center will be self-funded with the proceeds from the forecasting breakfast and publications.

Action Item 2: Since 1972, the Department of Economics has had a Center for Economic Education. The director of this Center has served the area by helping public school teachers improve the methods used to deliver instruction in economics. The center has been a medium for economic thought and pedagogical improvement for the RCOB, the College of Education, and public schools in the region.

This work is largely driven by the outstanding devotion and commitment of one professor who serves as the Center Director. This year we will enhance the ability of the director to conduct outreach and institutionalize the center into the processes of the RCOB. This will be accomplished by providing the director with a reduced teaching load and matching funding for a grant received through the Georgia Council on Economic Education.