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-I 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 Dean’s Advisory Council revised the strategic plan 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 I – Attract and Retain Qualified Students**

In addition to our annually recurring processes to recruit and retain students (e.g. attendance at visitation days, festival of majors, and the regulation 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 student’s 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. For the first time (in a long time) 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 sometime 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. 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 (Strategic Goal 5).

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 year.

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

1. The 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. Kathryn Brantley). It was decided not to split the Management and Business Systems Department, eliminating the need for the Chair of Information Systems position. Additional hires include: permanent department chairs in Management and Business Systems (Dr. Tom Gainey) and Marketing and Real Estate (Dr. Salil Talpede) as well as a half-time Associate Dean (Dr. Ron Best) to oversee graduate programs and accreditation activities (among other things). The search for a department chair for the Accounting and Finance Department is ongoing. 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 will continue.

**Action Items for Strategic Goal 5 – Maintain AACSBI Accreditation**

1. In June 2004, the RCOB submitted as formal request for maintenance of accreditation review for the undergraduate and master’s degree programs in business and for the undergraduate and master’s 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 comparable 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 the spring 2005 semester, the RCOB published an AACSBI 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 learning assurance activities. Also, during 2004-05, 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 AACSBI 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 AACSBI Maintenance of Accreditation activities during 2004-05:

**Creed/Vision Committee (C1)**

This committee spent 2003-04 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 2004-05, the following actions were accomplished by this committee:
a) 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);

b) The statement of ethical expectations was placed on the desktop of all the computers in the student computer labs;

c) Cards containing the statement of ethical expectations were printed up and are available in all departments;

d) 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 Committee (DAC). The committee reviewed the activities of the various committees during the year. Examples of specific AACSB-I 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-I 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-I 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 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 ethics 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-I 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-I (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 DAC will propose specific guidelines as to what constitutes an “academically qualified” faculty member as well as what constitutes a “professionally qualified” faculty member.

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 support one strategic goal within the mission statement of the RCOB. 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-I standards 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-I 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.