Introduction

This report reviews the progress and the continuous improvements successes of the Richards College of Business (RCOB) through the 2006-2007 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 2007-2008 academic year.

Section I: Strategic Action-Item Updates 2006-2007

“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: Mentor program: an alumnus approached the RCOB to suggest that we should formalize our mentoring program for students. During the 2006-2007 academic year, we completed a website for the mentoring program that will allow students to be linked to mentors in the community. This website will list the qualifications and experiences of individuals (alumni and others) and allow students to be linked to mentors who work in their area of interest. The mentors can select how involved they would like to be including exchanging emails with the student to provide career advice, job shadowing, or internship opportunities. During the 2006-2007 academic year we began the process of identifying these mentors and preparing to link them to students. This process will continue in 2007-2008.

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: The RCOB as a well developed program of assuring the learning of its students in all degree programs. In an effort to expand this data driven, systematic process, each department has initiated a review of how they assure the learning of students within their majors. This process will go on for the next few years as departments reflect on what their graduates should know and be able to do as a result of attaining a degree. The results of this process will be reported in departmental reports in years to follow.
Action Item 2: The graduate programs committee working with the associate dean completed an analysis of curriculum, admission, and program requirements for MBA programs in the regional market. Based on this analysis, and guided by the AACSB standards, the graduate programs committee adopted changes to the MBA program regarding the number of preparatory courses required, how the preparatory courses are delivered, the structure of the elective and required courses in the program and the admission standards. The results created an MBA program that is more flexible and accessible. The new guidelines allowed the flexibility for the RCOB to offer its MBA program at the University of West Georgia at Newnan center. This program enrolled 20 students in the fall 2007 semester and continues to grow. The new program was also marketed in ways that it had not been in the past including a billboard, direct mail to potential students, and radio and cable television advertisements. These new advertisement venues and the new flexibility built into the program curriculum increased the size of the incoming MBA class substantially. The graduate programs committee will continue to monitor the success of these changes and adjust program admission requirements and curriculum as needed.

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: During this year, the RCOB initiated and completed a review of the internship process within the RCOB. Based on this review, it was discovered that the methods of connecting students to internships was somewhat haphazard. Working with the university career service department, the RCOB developed a process to streamline and refocus this effort. A set of documents were developed to track this process so that administrators, students, faculty, and career services are all on the same page regarding the identification of internships and the process by which students are placed. The documents are in use by all departments and their effectiveness will continue to be reviewed by the strategic planning committee and the assistant dean of the RCOB.

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: A formal new faculty orientation was reinstated this year and will continue in years to come. Administration and faculty of all ranks and tenure participate in the new faculty orientation and work to welcome new faculty into the RCOB family. All new faculty orientation materials online have been updated and revised so that new and potential faculty will have access to who we are and what we do. Feedback from new faculty suggests that this process has been helpful. Additionally, the new faculty mentoring program was tested in the department of management. Two faculty members were assigned to each incoming faculty member; one of which came from the new faculty members discipline and the other from outside the discipline. These mentors were responsible for helping the new member of the faculty adjust to the RCOB, work life in this area, and other needs of the new faculty. This process worked well in the management department and will continue there. The strategic planning committee reviewed this process and considered implementing it across all departments, but elected against doing so. The committee felt that as the department of management is the largest department a formal
mentoring program would be beneficial, but that new faculty members in other departments are mentored by all members of the department and that no formal mentoring process is needed.

**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 additional to the breakfast, the Department of Economics publishes an annual West Georgia Regional Outlook which contains information on the regional economy. This event has been further institutionalized by the establishment of the Center for Business and Economic Research in the RCOB. The center director receives one course release in return for directing the forecasting breakfast and serving as the catalyst for leading research on the regional economy.

*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. To further institutionalize this center into the RCOB and the region, the director now receives a course release to help build the center and lead efforts to further enhance economic education in this region. Additionally, the RCOB matches a $3,000 grant from the Georgia Council on Economic Education. These funds are used to support events that support economic education in the region.

**Section II: Strategic Action Items for 2007-2008**

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the RCOB will focus on achieving the following action-items related to its 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: As part of our ongoing effort to help students transition from school to work, the RCOB will continue to enhance and improve RCOB interview days and our connection to the career services department at the University of West Georgia. There are substantial opportunities to collaborate with career services and help RCOB students prepare to enter the work environment. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the RCOB will assess the success of on-campus interview days and enhance and expand students preparation for interviews and entry into the work environment.
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: During the 2007-2008 academic year, the Undergraduate Programs and Graduate Programs Committees of the RCOB will evaluate the success of our assurance of learning process. The RCOB has accumulated a growing body of assessments of learning goals and will pursue a systematic evaluation of the validity and relevance of these assessments and make adjustments to the process and assessments as needed. Additionally, any curriculum or pedagogical changes that are needed as a result of this review will be addressed.

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: As the RCOB continues to grow in number of students, it is important for the RCOB to systematic policy regarding faculty to student ratio in all courses. A key component of the University of West Georgia is educational excellence in a personal environment. In order to maintain this environment, the RCOB must have a reasoned and thoughtful approach to class size and course offerings. This is particularly important as the number of courses offered inline is increasing. During this academic year, the strategic planning committee of the RCOB will review our faculty to student ratio in order to see if we need to adopt guidelines for class size and review whether changes in class size of course offerings have or will hinder the personal environment. Any recommendations will stem from the discussion in the Strategic Planning Committee of the RCOB.

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: Attracting and maintaining well trained and highly qualified faculty is a critical step in our ability to provide students a competitive edge in the marketplace upon graduation. In order to keep competitive in this environment, this year the RCOB will review its process of faculty evaluation with regard to research, teaching, and service. This review will focus on whether or not we need to adopt a college wide evaluation system, a greater consistency between departmental evaluation systems, or keep the current departmental evaluation system.

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

Action item 1: As we work to build the student experience in the RCOB, we have built unique space in the RCOB buildings. These new “learning labs” will serve as student team meeting rooms. Five rooms will provide space for up to five teams of 10 students to meet concurrently. This is a unique opportunity to build on external partnerships. During this year the naming rights to these learning labs will be sold to local businesses. This will allow them to have their name on a unique space in the RCOB building that will be used by students throughout their time as a
business student. It is estimated that these learning labs will be built, named, and open for student use during the spring 2008 semester.