Introduction

This report reviews the progress and the continuous improvements successes of the Richards College of Business (RCOB) through the 2007-2008 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 2008-2009 academic year.

Section I: Strategic Action Items Updates for 2007-2008

“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: Improve our process to help students’ transition from school to work.

This year the RCOB made progress toward more fully preparing graduates to fill positions of responsibility and ethical leadership upon graduation. These efforts brought about the following successes.

1) The RCOB formalized and centralized the internship program for RCOB students. The RCOB reviewed the methods used to help students identify internship opportunities and found that they often come from different sources. Many of these internships come through referrals from members of the faculty or friends. The RCOB developed a set of guidelines to determine when and if students will be receiving academic credit for their internship of if the internship will be for academic recognition (only a notation on the student’s transcript). The RCOB defined a set of guidelines that must be met for the student to receive academic credit. The process of exchanging internship information between the UWG Department of Career Services and RCOB was adopted.

2) The area of Management of Information Systems has a number of internship opportunities; they began to identify these on a common web site to attract students toward pursuing such opportunities. Also the American Marketing Association internship opportunities are now regularly advertised to current students.
3) The Strategic Planning Committee voted unanimously to identify the core BBA course ABED 3100 as the main contact course to introduce students to UWG’s Department of Career Services. This will allow UWG Career Service staff to have a stable and continuous point at which to introduce the Office of Career Services to all BBA students.

4) RCOB Interview Days were expanded and more employers were invited to participate. For the first time this year, separate interview days were established for accounting firms to visit campus and interview accounting students.

This academic year, substantial progress was made in the RCOB’s efforts to improve students’ transition from school to work.

**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: Implement changes based on the RCOB assurance of learning process.*

This academic year the RCOB Undergraduate and Graduate Program Committees reviewed all completed assurance of learning reports. The committee made several recommendations that have been implemented.

1) Based on reviewing the match between curriculum, course content and assurance of learning measurements, the Graduate Programs Committee recommended a change in the way assurance of learning data is collected in the MBA program. The discussion centered on how we measure whether or not students have improved their ability to use technology. The committee concluded that it was better to have students apply technology in courses rather than measure it as a stand alone topic. The committee recommended changing the MBA learning goals to reflect the need for students to be able to apply the use of technology within their mastery of the learning goal content, rather than listing the use of technology alone. The review of AOL data and course content led to this recommendation that will be implemented in the 2008-2009 academic year.

2) The Undergraduate Programs Committee reviewed all AOL data collections that are complete. Based on this feedback, the committee divided into groups to discuss each learning goal and review student performance. Following this review, the committee members focused on how we teach ethics and where and how that data is collected. The committee suggested moving the ethics measurement to a standardized test format in alternate years and an embedded measure in alternate years, rather than in the marketing course as it has been assessed. This seemed to fit better with the course content and course topics. The new schedule has been implemented.

3) The RCOB Undergraduate and Graduate Program Committees also reviewed the assurance of learning process to make sure that the loop was being closed on AOL data. This review concluded that the process could be enhanced by requesting faculty who teach similar courses to meet regularly to review the curriculum, measurement tools, and results. Previously RCOB faculty met to discuss the curriculum, but this happened
outside the AOL process that was largely handled by RCOB committees. The recommendation to include these faculty discussions formally in the AOL process will be brought before the faculty in the coming year.

4) As a follow up on the mentoring program, the program was launched enrolling both students and mentors, but ran into some technical problems and challenges linking students with the right mentors. The program is not taking new applicants while the technical details are corrected. It is anticipated that the program will be reopened during the 2008-2009 academic year.

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: Review our strategy regarding faculty to student ratio.

1) As the RCOB continues to grow in number of students, it is important for the RCOB to develop a policy regarding faculty to student ratios in all courses. Although the discussion was started this year, this action item was not complete and guidelines were not adopted. The discussion will continue in the coming year by the RCOB Strategic Planning Committee. Based on enrollment data, benchmarking and pedagogical goals this review could result in benchmarks for course sizes at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

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: Review the process of faculty evaluation with regard to research, teaching, and service.

1) The RCOB Strategic Planning Committee reviewed each department’s merit evaluation and identified any difference in weights. The committee then discussed whether or not it would make sense to move toward a college wide evaluation. After a thorough discussion, the committee concluded that it was in the best interest of the faculty and the departments to leave faculty evaluation at the department level, although all department merit evaluations fall within similar ranges for teaching, research, service, and other activities. This year the Management Department also revised its merit evaluation system.

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

Action item 1: Fund and Build Learning Labs
1) The RCOB completed construction on the learning labs during the 2007-2008 academic year. The naming rights to the learning labs were given to companies in return for their donation to fund the labs. In all nearly $100,000 was donated to the RCOB for the naming of the Learning Labs. The labs are now known as the: Airtran Airways Learning Lab, Harper Family Learning Lab; Dr. Dave Hovey Learning Lab; and the Advantage Office Solutions Learning Lab. These labs are well equipped and open for student use.

Section II: Strategic Actions for the 2008 - 2009 Academic Year

During the 2008-2009 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: Revisit Admission Process for the RCOB

1) Currently the college requires a 2.0 GPA for students to declare a major within the RCOB. The Strategic Planning Committee intends to study this policy to see the impact of raising this GPA to improve the quality of students admitted. This study will be bounded and guided by our mission to serve the West Georgia region and the Atlanta metropolitan area. This discussion will help us assure that we are balancing both growth and quality.

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: Implement Changes Based on the Assurance of Learning Process

1) The RCOB will continue to collect AOL data and improve our curriculum and instruction based on student results. This is a continual process that is integrated into our normal administrative processes.

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.

1) This year the RCOB will focus efforts in this area on working toward the creation of a Center for Student Success. This Center may house student advising, internships, and RCOB career service activities. Although the funding for such a center will come over time, the RCOB intends to create a model to work toward and begin initial steps toward building this center.

2) This year the RCOB plans to implement the revised mentoring program to help students link to mentors in their area of interest.
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: Review Mission Statement with Regard to Research

1) The RCOB Strategic Planning committee intends to review our mission statement with regard to the balance of research that is discipline, pedagogical, and theory-based. This review will help our mission statement reflect the type of research that is desired by the faculty and the type of research that supports the mission of the RCOB.

Action Item 2: Organizational Structure

1) Over the last few decades, the RCOB has grown in terms of students and faculty. However, this growth has not been equal across departments, degree programs, or areas of study. This has lead to inequalities in terms of faculty within departments, workload outside the classroom (i.e. advising, program oversight, service to students), and workload of department chairs. The RCOB Strategic Planning Committee intends to review the departmental structure of the RCOB and recommend any modifications during the 2008-2009 academic year.

Action Item 3: Faculty Workload

1) As noted in correspondence regarding the most recent RCOB AACSB Maintenance visit: “There is ambiguity on the relative importance of teaching, scholarship, and service.” This year the RCOB Strategic Planning Committee will lead a charge to study faculty workload in the RCOB. This study will identify areas of concern to faculty and make recommendations about policies and practices that can be modified to replace this ambiguity with transparency.

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

Although there are no specific action items planned for the coming year, regular fund and friend raising efforts will continue with particular attention being paid to the RCOB Visionary Endowment.