



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Self-Evaluation Report
Executive Summary

June 1, 2002

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The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University began in 1995 to chart its path toward accreditation by AACSB International. This was to be a unique journey that would capitalize on the opportunity to build a new business school from the ground up. Important strategic decisions were made around one central foundation element. That element was the ability to recruit an initial cadre of quality faculty with a clear vision for the new school. That faculty strength has been pivotal to the success of the College of Business and its ability to deliver on a defined mission. With an emphasis on quality, a focus on mission, and the integral use of AACSB International's continuous improvement benchmarks, the College of Business embarked on its journey towards accreditation.

OVERVIEW

Florida Gulf Coast University (the "University" or FGCU) is a new school that was created to be a distinguished institution of higher education for the 21st century. The University was established on a powerful base of technology, with all of its buildings and facilities equipped for modern computer and information systems support. Opened for classes in the fall of 1997 with 117 instructional faculty, two academic buildings, a library, a broadcast facility, three support buildings, and approximately 2,500 students, FGCU became Florida's tenth public institution of higher education. The University has five academic units: the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, College of Health Professions, and a College of Professional Studies. The University currently enrolls approximately 4,200 students, operates with a total annual budget from all sources of about \$53.3 million, and employs 178 instructional faculty. Since opening for classes five years ago, the University has expanded its infrastructure by completing a loop road around the academic buildings and by adding three more academic buildings, an athletic complex, a physical plant facility, and a resident complex that houses over 800 students. The University also initiated four intercollegiate athletic programs and will introduce six more athletic programs in the fall of 2002. The University Foundation has assets in excess of \$50 million and an endowment of over \$16 million. Within this overall growth, the College of Business (the "College") has seen a robust expansion and now reflects 34 percent of the declared majors in the University.

The College of Business has systematically planned and made strategic decisions that are consistent with its mission. Immediately upon being hired in August of 1995, the founding dean started the planning process that would place the College on a course to meet or exceed the accreditation standards of AACSB International. One fundamental step was to identify and create academic business programs that would be nationally competitive and staffed by faculty appropriate to achieving that goal. A second step was to immediately develop program measures for continuous improvement that would satisfy both the AACSB International and University accreditation expectations. In 1995, the University had also begun planning for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Finally, since the University was created as an institution with a regional mission, the College aggressively began to establish relationships with area economic development and business leaders. These networks would be central resources in guiding program development that would add value to the Southwest Florida economy, while academically connecting campus programs to the business environment. The College was poised to develop strategies to shape and deliver its mission.

During the 1995-1996 academic year, the founding dean visited AACSB International's office in St. Louis to discuss accreditation plans; he then initiated a series of focused meetings with area and national business leaders. Initial College vision and mission statements were developed that are consistent with the University's founding mission statement, as approved by the Florida Legislature. The dean also began recruiting a leadership team of associate deans and department chairs to assist in strategic and curriculum planning and faculty recruitment. Following their arrival on campus, the faculty were engaged in shaping the initial vision into a mission statement for the College.

VISION

The College of Business will help set new standards of excellence with its academic programs, faculty accomplishments, and student success, while continuously reflecting the dynamic environment of modern business opportunities. The College's model of partnership with its external business constituents will be a national benchmark that will consistently bring powerful knowledge into our undergraduate and graduate learning. The College will be an international leader in innovative ways of integrating technology and global awareness into the business education experience.

To drive its goal of accreditation by AACSB International, the College intended to distinguish itself in three areas of strategic importance to its mission: the interaction and partnership with external constituents in the business community, the integration of technology skills throughout the business curriculum, and the advancement of global awareness within the faculty and academic programs. Strategic programs were then conceived to attain these three areas of distinction.

Center for Leadership & Innovation This external entity represents an umbrella under which programs could be created that tangibly linked College resources and academic programs to external partners. These included an Executive MBA program, a Small Business Development Center, and a collection of applied faculty research institutes and sponsored clinical projects for area business organizations. The center was developed with external funding and was operational when the new faculty arrived.

Technology Integration It was vital to recruit faculty across all departments with strong technology interests, followed by the development of an *Integrated Program Matrix* (IPM). The IPM includes technology content measures for academic programs and courses. This emphasis on technology was initially facilitated by the University's distance learning focus.

Second Circle International Model The College also developed a powerful model for global awareness that mixes international academic partnerships, regional and state economic development constituents, and international business partnerships. The strength of this international program is its depth. It provides a much richer environment for internationalizing faculty and programs than a traditional university's international exchange program.

After developing an accreditation plan, the College was admitted to AACSB International's Candidacy Program in 1999. Guided by this plan, the College has continued to measure and shape its program quality under AACSB International benchmarks. The College achieved a responsive excellence in its curricula, ensured faculty development and scholarship, and utilized policies and processes for continuous improvement in pursuit of its mission. While in Candidacy status, the College garnered virtually no noted concerns or areas needing improvement from the Candidacy Committee. The College of Business currently meets or exceeds all AACSB International accreditation standards.

PRECONDITIONS

The College meets the Preconditions for AACSB International accreditation of its bachelor's and master's level degree programs. From the inception of the University, the College of Business was developed with the challenging standards and processes of AACSB International as a benchmark. The dean of the College, the faculty, University administration, and other stakeholders created business programs consistently backed by processes and procedures that are continuously reviewed for quality.

With over 25 percent of the student enrollment and 34 percent of the declared majors, the College is an integral and important part of the University. The College offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, with majors in Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Finance, Management, and Marketing. Additionally, the College offers the Master of Business Administration, the Executive MBA, the Master of Science in Accounting and Taxation, and the Master of Science in Computer Information Systems. The College has an enrollment of about 1,100 students, with 34 full-time faculty and a budget of approximately \$4 million. This budget figure is expected to increase when the University attains its enrollment goals and begins to receive "formula funding" from the state.

The College developed an extensive electronic database titled the *Faculty Resource Management Plan* that is used to measure and monitor virtually every aspect of academic program quality and faculty productivity. This database is a management tool used to strengthen department and College decision-making. In keeping with its emphasis on quality, the College continues to refine its measures and processes as it engages in continuous improvement.

MISSION

The Florida Gulf Coast University College of Business is dedicated to providing technologically progressive programs and services designed to enhance the skills and competencies of university students and working professionals in the five-county region. We achieve this through a variety of flexible partnerships, programs, and scholarship within a "second circle" model that bridges the university and the domestic and international community.

The College's mission is consonant with the University's mission as a teaching institution. The College has achieved an overall high quality in delivering this mission. The College is focused on providing a student-centered learning environment with emphasis on technology, globalization, and ethical responsibility. The College marries its undergraduate education programs with selected graduate degrees in areas of value to the business community. Faculty are involved in a wide range of scholarly

endeavors that foster excellence in learning. Service to the University, College, profession, and community is also an expected part of the wider College mission. This connects the University to the domestic and international community. Individual faculty members can select the relative emphasis they place on teaching, scholarship, and service within the College's goal of not less than 65 percent emphasis on teaching and 35 percent divided between scholarship and service. In keeping with changes in the external business environment, the College conducts periodic reviews of its mission.

Additionally, the College's mission stresses flexible partnerships with the business community in a manner consistent with internationalizing both the curriculum and the region. The College's mission includes an important economic development and business outreach dimension. This element of the mission is met through responsive programs in the Center for Leadership & Innovation and is supplemented by interaction with a prestigious assemblage of executives who serve on the College of Business Advisory Council and departmental advisory boards. Further connection with the area business community occurs through programs in the Small Business Development Center and faculty clinical interaction with area business and professional organizations. The membership of the dean and other faculty in economic development and similar organizations in Southwest Florida furthers the College's linkage with external constituencies. Finally, through its internship programs, *real world* class projects, and visiting executive speakers, the College also involves students in regional economic development issues.

As one of its mission goals, the College seeks to ensure that students attain competency in the core areas of technological proficiency, communication skills, teamwork and professional skills, creative and analytical thinking, appreciation of the diverse global environment of business, and systems orientation. The College ensures the inclusion of these competency areas in its academic programs through data included in an *Integrated Program Matrix* applied to all degree programs and through the use of a comprehensive national exam administered to graduating seniors. Additionally, the College is an integral part of the University's commitment to ensure that students achieve the learning goals of aesthetic sensibility, cultural diversity, an ecological perspective, effective communication, ethical responsibility, information literacy, problem-solving abilities, technological literacy, and community awareness and involvement.

FACULTY COMPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The College recognizes that the recruitment, development, and support of qualified faculty and staff are essential to excellence in business education. The College has been a leader on campus in sustaining the ongoing intellectual contribution and continuous instructional and professional research that serves the needs of students, *Second Circle* partnerships, and economic development.

The College has established policies and procedures that promote and maintain an open and collegial environment. New academic program initiatives are encouraged and supported. Various structures assure faculty involvement in an extensive governance and committee system. The dean furthered this involvement through the establishment of a dean's Faculty Advisory Council, with a representative member sitting on the College's leadership team.

The College has an impressive cadre of 34 full-time faculty members with over 90 percent holding terminal degrees from AACSB International accredited schools in their area of teaching emphasis. This highly qualified group of full-time faculty provides approximately 84 percent of the teaching coverage in the undergraduate programs and 88 percent in the graduate programs. The College exceeds the AACSB International minimum qualification for full-time equivalent faculty and for academically and professionally qualified faculty.

At the heart of the College's faculty development program is the annual Professional Development Plan, which the individual faculty member prepares each year for discussion with his or her department chair. This plan incorporates information from the faculty member's evaluation for the previous year and develops goals and activities for the upcoming academic year. The individual plan includes responsibilities across the teaching, scholarship, and service expectations for faculty. At the end of the academic year, the faculty member submits an annual report, charting progress against the annual plan, to the department chair. Department chairs review faculty progress toward their goals using the guidelines and standards established by the *College Framework for Contract Renewal, Tenure and Promotion*. These policies were developed and refined by the faculty in the College's first two years of operation.

Florida Gulf Coast University faculty are unionized and under the terms of a statewide collective bargaining agreement for all public universities. Within the state system, FGCU is the only school that operates primarily on a multiyear contract system, rather than a tenure-granting basis. In the business school, assistant professors typically have a three-year contract, associate professors a four-year contract, and full professors a five-year contract. These contracts are renewable and all assistant and associate professors are eligible for promotion. Seven of the College's 34 faculty are in tenure-track positions, carried over to FGCU from the former University of South Florida-Fort Myers branch campus. This branch campus closed when the new university opened. The standards for review, evaluation, and promotion are the same for both multiyear and tenure-track faculty in the College.

Faculty members are well supported in their efforts to sustain and improve quality in their teaching and research. The University operates a full department of Instructional Technology, and both the University and College have developed orientation programs for new and adjunct faculty. The University provides annual support for faculty development that averages about \$1,000 per faculty member. In addition, the University instituted a program of summer grants in 1999 that funds about five projects a year at \$5,000 each. The College has been a leader on campus in developing its own support for summer research grants. Since 1998, the College has funded over \$200,000 in summer research grants for business school faculty. Programs in the College's Center for Leadership & Innovation generated these research support funds. Since opening, three business faculty have been granted sabbaticals, with one of these going to a faculty who was named a Fulbright Scholar for the 2002-2003 academic year.

The College's annual performance review process, in combination with research grant support, has enhanced the development of the faculty. Of the 34 full-time faculty members, 91 percent are academically qualified under AACSB International standards. The faculty was further strengthened by the addition of three chaired professors (Eminent Scholars) who were hired in the fall of 2000. In addition, the College will add another eminent scholar and three endowed professorships in the 2002-2003 academic year. This will mean that 20 percent of the faculty in the College will be endowed professors of different types by 2003. Higher levels in the quantity and quality of scholarly output are expected for graduate faculty status, and 90 percent of the faculty have already achieved graduate faculty status. The College has a very strong faculty.

CURRICULUM CONTENT AND EVALUATION

The objectives of undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business are consistent with the University's and the College's mission statements. The curriculum for all undergraduate and graduate business degree programs was developed in consultation with external stakeholders and is in concert with the needs of our students and working professionals in the region. The curriculum emphasizes critical thinking skills, oral and written communication, technological proficiency, globalization, cultural diversity, and ethical responsibility. The College integrates economic development and internationalization activities into its curriculum by way of the institutes housed in the Center for Leadership & Innovation and through its *Second Circle* interactions. Students are involved in internships and class projects, and faculty are involved in clinical activities related to the area's economic development.

Prior to the opening of the University, the dean and the leadership team brought together focus groups from the business community to determine critical skills to be contained in the various degree programs. These groups were also asked to identify degree programs important to the current and future workforce needs of the area. Working with the faculty transitioning to Florida Gulf Coast University from the University of South Florida-Fort Myers campus, the College developed and implemented the initial curricula. In 1997, when the University opened, the College of Business faculty instituted standing undergraduate and graduate Curriculum Committees and began a comprehensive curriculum review. This review and continuous improvement process resulted in the faculty ratifying or modifying the curricula.

Program assessment is an integral part of the College's curriculum planning and continuous improvement process. In the fall of 1997, even before assessment data were available, the College utilized the *Integrated Program Matrix* to map each course against the University, College, and AACSB International outcomes. This IPM is a central part of the continuous improvement program in the College. For example, in 1999 the Graduate Program Committee instituted a comprehensive review and modification of the MBA curriculum. After meeting with stakeholders, each course was mapped against the expected curriculum outcomes and a revised curriculum was proposed to assure adequate coverage in the various perspectives advanced by the University, College, and AACSB International. The IPMs are periodically reviewed to ensure that appropriate coverage is maintained as the curriculum is modified. As part of the continuous improvement process, the College also utilizes two major program assessment tools: the ETS Major Field Test and the Stetson Curriculum Content Survey of graduating students, alumni, and faculty. Additional information is sought from the College of Business Advisory Council and from employers connected to the College through its participation in several area workforce committees.

Using feedback from our ongoing review process, the Curriculum Committees have made important changes in curricula since the University opened. Two new Master of Science degrees were added and the MBA program was reformulated to increase coverage in the functional areas. The undergraduate degree programs were streamlined and the number of concentrations was reviewed. Degree concentrations with low enrollment were consolidated or eliminated in response to student, alumni, and community feedback.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Instructional resources are current and are of sufficient quality, breadth, and depth to effectively support the College's mission. Office and administrative space is adequate to meet the current needs of the College and all faculty members occupy individual offices in modern facilities. The University also provides training and support for faculty involved in distance education. All classrooms are prewired for easy access to the Internet and a number of classrooms are permanently fitted with a teaching podium that contains a computer, VCR, and camera connected to a ceiling-mounted projector. The University also maintains a number of mobile projection systems that are used in classrooms not fitted with teaching podiums. The University was created with an emphasis on technology to support and enhance pedagogy.

The University and the College stress technological proficiency among students and faculty. All computer classrooms are equipped with current multimedia computer hardware and software. These resources are continuously monitored and updated as needed to meet the learning needs of students. The University also maintains sufficient computer labs to meet the needs of students for computing services outside of the classroom. The Library and all residence halls are also well equipped with Internet access and the University maintains a dial-up capability for remote access. All faculty and staff are provided with desktop computers loaded with some of the same software that is used in the classroom. Computer technology is planned for a three-year replacement cycle. Ongoing training and assistance are made available to students, faculty, and staff by the University's office of Instructional Technology.

The Library provides an excellent collection of both hard copy and electronic resources. Students and faculty have remote access to the catalog, to book renewal services, and to most of the electronic databases. The Library maintains an acquisition budget that ensures adequate resources to support quality programming. The Library tracks user access and utilization of business electronic sources and provides this information to the College for use in curriculum planning and evaluation. The Library also belongs to the consortium of state university libraries and provides additional resources through interlibrary loans. The American Library Association, through its Business Reference and Services section, has given special international recognition to the Library for its support of the College's accreditation effort.

STUDENTS

The College attracts students who are capable of meeting the rigorous standards demanded by our programs. Most students are drawn from the five-county Southwest Florida service area and the student diversity is reflective of the region. The open admissions policy of the University makes undergraduate business programs accessible to all students who meet the basic University entry requirements. Given this open admissions policy, the College has focused on outcome measures like the national ETS exam to measure and monitor quality. The FGCU College of Business seniors scored above the average of the national cohort taking the exam. Because of its *Second Circle* partnership activities with foreign universities, the College has a growing number of international students. In the fall of 2001, 72 percent of the 53 international students at the University were business majors.

Entry requirements for graduate programs are more selective, with students having to meet entry requirements that are above those established by the state. Graduate students meet formal admissions standards that include the Graduate Management Aptitude Test and undergraduate academic performance indicators.

Freshman advising is handled through the University's centralized Student Services division. After completing 30 hours of coursework, business students are then advised by the College's Student Affairs office. The College has an excellent advising system in place and several College of Business processes have become University benchmarks. The recent addition of an *Introduction to Business* course will enable the College to better orient freshmen to the field of business. The role of faculty in advising is concentrated on career advising and intended to help students make strong curricular choices to achieve professional success. The assistant dean and the MBA director advise all graduate students, and the director of the Executive MBA program advises the Executive MBA students. The creation of the Undergraduate Business Association and the Graduate Business Association has provided additional student-faculty interaction. These associates represent another means of obtaining stakeholder input to program development and improvement.

All business students and alumni have access to the University's career development and placement services. The College's partnership with the University's office of Career Development Services improves service delivery for both graduate and undergraduate business students. The College assists with job referrals, applied projects, career counseling, and internships. The College dramatically strengthens its career linkage in Southwest Florida through its Executive MBA program and its extensive involvement with the area business community. Virtually all major employers in the area are connected to the College through these external programs.

INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Since the opening of the University, College of Business faculty members have consistently engaged in the successful pursuit of scholarship. The faculty shaped a scholarship expectation appropriate to the mission of the College during the first year of operation. The faculty have consistently exceeded those minimums. In the past five years, the 34 full-time faculty in the College have authored or coauthored 198 refereed journal articles and 360 refereed conference proceedings and presentations, for an overall total of 558 refereed scholarly endeavors. Of the 34 faculty members, 97 percent are either academically or professionally qualified under AACSB International standards. The hiring of a high-quality faculty has resulted in a dedication to teaching, service, and intellectual contribution at the highest levels.

What is singularly impressive about the scholarship accomplishments of the faculty is the challenging environment in which they compiled such a successful research record. Anyone who has not experienced it could never appreciate the work involved in creating a new business school in a new university. Every structure and academic standard must be developed by a vast array of committees and processes, while classes are being conducted and service obligations are being fulfilled. That service and teaching record is, in itself, impressive. Yet, the College faculty sustained a focus on scholarship that both ensured intellectual growth and brought strength to their separately impressive instructional activities. Their record clearly demonstrates that the College has institutionalized the importance and expectation of strong intellectual contribution.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The University is expected to grow to an enrollment exceeding 10,000 students in the next seven years. Within that enrollment, the College of Business is expected to enroll 25 percent of the declared majors at Florida Gulf Coast University. A major development on the University's immediate horizon is a new Research and Technology Park. This park will encompass about 200 acres, of which 20 acres have been donated to the University. The Center for Leadership & Innovation is scheduled to be the initial University presence in the park. The location of the park is just two miles from campus and one mile from the newly expanded Southwest Florida International Airport. As business faculty and programs grow, plans will continue for a new building for the College, perhaps in partnership with an engineering program now being evaluated. All of these elements in the academic future of the College will continue to enhance its integral partnership with the area business community.

CONCLUSION

Since its inception in 1995, the College has developed and implemented processes aimed at ensuring high quality and continuous improvement. The dean and the faculty have developed a clear mission statement and used it to guide strategic and tactical decisions in the College. This mission-driven approach permeates every aspect of the College's operations, including curriculum planning, recruitment and development of faculty, and the allocation of resources. The College's *Faculty Resource Management Plan* and its dynamic database are decision-making tools that enable the leadership team to systematically analyze the many questions critical to forecasting program growth and development in a changing economic environment. With an excellent curriculum, an active and high-quality faculty, processes for continuous improvement, and an entrepreneurial attitude, the College has a record of success in its mission *to provide technologically progressive programs and services designed to enhance the skills and competencies of university students and working professionals.*

