TEAM VISIT REPORT
MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION REVIEW

University of Southern Mississippi
College of Business

I.   **Team Recommendation**

The team recommendation reflects the opinion of the Peer Review Team only. It will be reviewed for concurrence or remanded to the team by the appropriate accreditation committee. The role of the accreditation committee is to ensure consistent application of the AACSB International accreditation standards and processes across peer review teams.

Within ten days of receipt of this report, the applicant should send the team any comments and corrections related to factual information noted in this report. A copy should also be sent to the appropriate committee chair in care of the AACSB International office.

A. Team Recommendation

The recommendation of the Peer Review Team is that the maintenance of accreditation review of the undergraduate and master's degree programs in business offered by College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi be continued for an additional year. The educational quality issues relating to the accreditation standards and expectations for resolution are listed below. Concurrence by the accreditation committee is required prior to official notification. Sixth year review does not require ratification by the Board of Directors because sixth year review does not change the accredited status of the member. Applicants participating in these on-going reviews are not announced or communicated by AACSB International to its members or the public.

B. Subsequent Review of Team Recommendation

The Maintenance of Accreditation committee will review this report, and any response from the applicant, at its next scheduled meeting (normally, provided that the report is received at least three weeks in advance of the meeting). The committee will meet March 30, 2007.

II.   **Identification of Areas That Must Be Addressed During Sixth Year Review**

A. **Standard 1 and 2 (Mission Statement and Mission Appropriateness)**

The peer review team recommends that the mission statement of the College of Business be revised in accordance with Standards 1 and 2. The team

noted that the mission of the College of Business was to "build careers." The documented activities and accomplishments of student, faculty, and staff in the College, however, go far beyond the mission statement. The mission statement should also reference how the intellectual contributions of the faculty advance the knowledge and practice of business and management.

B. Standard 10 (Faculty Qualifications)

The peer review team noted that the while the College of Business reports that over 90 percent of the participating faculty members are AQ, a high percentage of the intellectual contributions reported in the 5th Year Maintenance Report were within the last two years. The reported percentage of AQ faculty members is also a result of a number of new assistant professors. Since 2000, the College of Business has hired 18 faculty members. For several new faculty members their AQ status was based on the date of their degree rather than their respective contributions.

The peer review team also reviewed the quality of the published intellectual contributions. Based on this review it was the team's judgment that two faculty members were not AQ. During the campus visit, the team requested that Table 10-1 be revised to reflect the team's recommendation (Appendix 1).

It is the judgment of the peer review team that additional time is needed to assess the impact these new faculty will have on the overall AQ of the College of Business. The school should report on the AQ status of its faculty resources, the progress of the new faculty in achieving AQ status on the basis of their continuing professional activities and not based on their degree only.

C. Standard 11 (Faculty Management and Support)

As a follow-up to Standard 10, the Peer Review Team found that the assistant professors had a wide range of views regarding expectations for promotion and tenure. The peer review team found faculty mentoring for new faculty to be in an early stage of development.

Due to the significant hiring across all the departments, the school should address as part of its 6th year review report progress in establishing clear expectations for all faculty and what efforts are underway to provide guidance and mentoring of new faculty who have joined the school.

D. Standards 16-18 (Assurance of Learning)

The Peer Review Team found that the Assurance of Learning was at an early stage of development for both the undergraduate programs and the

MBA. The peer review team found that too much reliance was being placed on indirect measures rather direct measure including course embedded measures. Documentation on "closing the loop" and how the data collected was used by the program faculty was incomplete. Several changes that were mentioned during the campus visit were based on anecdotal observations rather than on the assessment process.

The peer review team recommends that the College of Business continue to develop its assurance of learning program. Emphasis should be placed on direct measures including course embedded measures. Greater detail should be placed on the operationalization of performance dimensions by moving from holistic to analytic rubrics. Based on the data, a more effective means should be incorporated into the assurance of learning program to capture the changes to programs and thus document continuous improvement. Finally, in the judgment of the team, the College of Business should identify key faculty to steward the assurance of learning process.

The school should report on its progress in the development and implementation of its assurance of learning program across all degree programs.

III.   **Relevant Facts and Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses in Support of the Team Accreditation Recommendation**

A. **Educational Improvement**

The College of Business is developing an assurance of learning program for its undergraduate programs as well as for the MBA program. Due to the recent SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation, learning objectives and assessment methods have been specified for each major. The College of Business was able to build upon the SACS requirement as a step toward meeting AACSB International assurance of learning standards.

The acquisition of WEAVE software by the University of Southern Mississippi has been adopted by the College of Business to support the data management activities for the assurance of learning. The peer review team was impressed with the ability of the College of Business to access data for assurance of learning activities.

The undergraduate program in business relies heavily on the capstone course. The team was impressed that 100% of the students enrolled in the capstone course were assessed as part of the assurance of learning program rather than relying on a sampling plan. The MBA program makes use of the

Core Concept Exam. The matrix provided the team shows significant analysis of where the graduate students are receiving coverage.

The development of the assurance of learning program for the undergraduate program is well underway, but comparable progress has not occurred for the MBA program. The peer review team found that for both the undergraduate programs and the MBA, the transition from reliance on indirect measures to direct measures was far from complete as evidenced by the use of surveys. The progress that is being made with the assurance of learning appears to be the result of a small cadre of professors. It is the judgment of the team that in the future, the College of Business needs to place more emphasis on involving a larger percentage of the faculty in the assurance of learning process.

The peer review team had an issue with the relationship between the College's mission statement and the assurance of learning. Because the mission statement focuses on "developing careers," the team had questioned how the statement guided the development of the learning objectives.

A. Strategic Management

The mission statement and accompanying vision statement are fully integrated throughout the College of Business. Students, faculty, and the business community are linked in the mission of the College to develop careers for the graduates.

A formalized strategic planning process involving students, faculty, and outside constituents began working on the mission and vision in 2003. The process resulted in 20 "action items" that formed the nucleus for the maintenance of accreditation.

The mission to develop careers is reflected in the action by the College to fund a full-time position career placement advisor. Students enrolled on the Gulf Coast Campus are linked to the College's placement office via email. In addition, the career advisor goes to the Gulf Coast Campus at least once per month. All employer interviews, however, take place on the University of Southern Mississippi main campus

While intellectual contributions are not an integral part of the mission statement, they are included as part of the core values of the College of Business. An explicit intellectual contribution profile of 40% basic research, 40% applied research, and 20% pedagogical research was approved by the faculty.

It does appear, however, that the mission statement of the College of Business is fairly narrow in scope. Based on the 5th Year Maintenance

Report as well as the campus visit, the faculty, staff, and students of the College of Business are engaged in activities that go beyond career development.

B. Fulfillment of Mission

The College of Business, in the judgment of the peer review team has fulfilled its mission with respect to faculty sufficiency, staff sufficiency, and faculty qualifications, subject to concerns stated earlier, at both the University of Southern Mississippi campus and the Gulf Coast Campus. The College of Business has a faculty comprised of participating and supporting faculty sufficient to achieve its educational mission. For each teaching discipline in the College, in excess of 60% of the student credit hours were taught by participating faculty during the current 2006-07 academic year. The faculty sufficiency coverage by the participating faculty at the Gulf Coast Campus is currently 96.3%. The College of Business makes limited use of supporting faculty. The percentage of the participating faculty that are full-time faculty exceeds 90 percent at both campuses (see attachment 2). The high percentage of participating faculty can be attributed to the hiring that has been authorized by the President and Provost of the University of Southern Mississippi. Since 2000 approximately nineteen assistant professors have been hired by the College of Business.

The faculty members recognize clearly their role in the fulfillment of the mission. It was evident from the campus visit that the faculty is engaged in advising and mentoring students consistent with the stated mission of the College. The level of intellectual contributions across the College faculty has increased substantially since the extensive strategic planning exercise that resulted in the mission statement and vision. The percentage of participating faculty who are either AQ or PQ exceeds the 50 percent standard on both campuses. The team also found the AQ faculty to be distributed equally across the teaching disciplines. Overall, 86.9 percent of the faculty members are academically qualified. By academic department the range was as high as 91.7% for the department of Economics, Finance & International Business and a low of 77.5% for the School of Accountancy & Information Systems. These percentages will differ from those reported in the 5th Year Maintenance Report. In the course of the campus visit, the peer review team reviewed the intellectual contributions of the faculty. It was the judgment of the team that several faculty members listed as academically qualified should be classified as not academically qualified.

Overall the College of Business maintains a sufficient staff to support the educational mission. There is sufficient advising staff to provide timely information to the students. Consistent with the mission of the College of Business, a full-service career center was established in cooperation with the

University Career Services Office. The Career Center supports both business students at both campuses.

In discussion with students at the Gulf Coast Campus, as well as observations from the Peer Review Team, it does appear that the College of Business will need to expend additional resources to support the students. While students have access to the College of Business support offices via email and telephone, face-to-face contact with support staff is limited. The full-time faculty members assigned to the Gulf Coast Campus have stepped up to assist students in advising and mentoring, but additional support does need to be provided by the College.

IV. Commendations of Strengths, Innovations, and Unique Features

A. Gulf Coast Campus

The Peer Review Team would like to commend the faculty and staff of the College of Business for its efforts in dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Faculty, staff, and students at the Gulf Coast Campus lost homes and possessions as a result of the storm. Every building on the campus was severely damaged. Within a few months, an alternative set of buildings were acquired by the university and a renovations project started. Today the Gulf Coast Campus is functioning. Classrooms and faculty offices are now available. In reviewing the damage to the campus, it is remarkable the progress that has been made. Today, headcount and student credit hours are just short of the pre-Hurricane Katrina numbers.

B. College Career Service Center

The College of Business established a career services center to support business students on both campuses. The center, under the Direction of Mr. Rusty Anderson, provides a range of support activities including assistance with resumes, interviewing, and career guidance.

C. Electronic alumni screening program

To assist with the development activities, the College of Business invested in an alumni screening program. The program will provide access to the approximately 18,000 alumni of the College of Business.

V. Opportunities for Continuous Improvement Relevant to the Accreditation Standards

A. Mission and Vision

The College of Business as a result of a major strategic planning initiative finalized a mission and vision statement and in the process identified twenty action items. In the judgment of the committee, the strategic planning process should continue with emphasis on integrating the mission statement with the visioning statement.

B. Faculty Qualifications

The College of Business should begin strengthening the overall quality of the intellectual contributions. In preparation for the 5th Year Maintenance Report, it was the team's observation that emphasis was placed on generating sufficient intellectual contribution such that faculty would meet the standard for being academically qualified. The College of Business should begin to focus on the quality of the intellectual contributions, particularly in peer reviewed journals.

C. Assurance of Learning

The College of Business has developed an excellent base from which to build a strong assurance of learning program. In the judgment of the team, the College should increase the use of direct measures for assessment and thereby rely less on survey instruments. With the adoption of WEAVE, the College will be in a strong position to document areas of continuous improvement for the various degree programs.

D. Staff Sufficiency and Student Support

The Gulf Coast Campus is in need of additional staff and student support. As the student body returns to the campus the need for advising and career services will only increase. Current students felt that they were being ignored at the expense of the University of Southern Mississippi.

While in the rebuilding stage of the Gulf Coast Campus, attention should be paid to providing space for students to meet and study. Several students mentioned having to sit in their cars waiting for classes to start. There is limited space for students to meet either before or after class to work on group projects.

VI. Summary of Visit

A. The College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi is comprised of the School of Accounting and Information Systems, and three departments: Economics, Finance, and International Business; Management and Marketing; and Tourism Management. Supporting the College's service mission as well as faculty research initiatives are the following centers: the

Center for Financial Services, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, and the Center for Economic Education.

The College of Business was founded in 1947 as the Division of Commerce with the current name being adopted in 2004. Since its founding, the College of Business has had stable leadership. There have been three deans following Dr. Joseph Green, the founding dean. The current dean, Dr. Harold Doty was appointed in 2003.

The College of Business is primarily an undergraduate institution. There are currently 2,434 undergraduate students and 115 graduate students enrolled in the College of Business. Supporting the educational mission are seventy-two participating faculty of which sixty-six hold a doctoral degree. Of the sixty-six faculty, sixty are academically qualified. The College makes limited use of adjunct faculty with only five supporting faculty being employed during the 2005-2006 academic year.

B. List of degree programs included in the review and the number of program graduates in the most recent year;

Name of Degree Program	Major(s), Concentration(s), Area(s) of Emphasis	Graduates
BS in Business Administration	Accounting	68
	Business Administration	26
	Economics	2
	Finance	48
	Financial Information Systems	2
	International Business	12
	Management (General)	18
	Management (HR)	60
	Management Information Sys	39
	Marketing	73
	Personal Financial Planning	10
	Production Operations Mgt	2
	Real Estate	10
	Tourism Mgt (Casino/Resort)	3
	Tourism Mgt (Hotel Mgt)	20
	Tourism Mgt (Restaurant Mgt)	18
Bachelor of Science	Fashion Merchandising	18
Bachelor of Arts	Economics (with mathematics)	1
	Economics (with social sciences)	0
Master of Business Administration		35
Master of Public Accounting		13

C. List of Comparison Groups:

   i. Comparable Peers

       Central Missouri State University
       East Tennessee State University
       University of Nevada, Reno
       University of North Carolina at Greensboro
       Ohio University, College of Business
       Western Illinois University

   ii. Competitive Group

       Jackson State University
       Louisiana State University
       Millsaps College
       Mississippi State University
       University of New Orleans
       University of Mississippi
       University of South Alabama
       Southeastern Louisiana University
       Tulane University

   iii. Aspirant Group

       Kansas State University
       University of Binghamton

D. Review Team Members

Wm. Theodore Cummings (Business Chair)	University of Houston-Clear Lake
C. Edward Arrington (Vice Chair)	University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Danny Arnold (Accounting Member)	Frostburg State University
Linda Garceau (Business member)	East Tennessee State University

E. Visit Schedule

   See Attachment

F. Materials Reviewed

   AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation Reports (business administration)
   AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation Reports (accounting)
   College of Business electronic files pertaining to each standard
   College of Business faculty intellectual contribution files