

THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
GEORGIA SOUTHERN
UNIVERSITY



COBA VISION 2010

Remembering the Past,
Embracing the *Present*,
Looking To the Future.

COBA Vision 2010

Where We've Been



In 1906, the First District Agricultural & Mechanical School – an institution that would evolve into Georgia Southern University – was born. Approximately 50 years later, in 1959, the business program began. Today, that program has grown into the College of Business Administration, or “COBA,” as we call it.

The first degree program offered through the business school was the “business education” program, which prepared teachers to teach business principles such as keyboarding, shorthand, and professional letter writing courses in high schools.

Soon the study of economics dominated the business curriculum nationally. For many years, a degree in business meant that students were immersed in economic principles. For example, today’s well-known economists such as Alan Greenspan, Paul Volcker, and Milton Friedman were business students in the era of the 1950s and 1960s when economics was king.

Gradually in the late 1960s and early 1970s, business programs in America’s colleges and universities began to come of age. The functional disciplines of accounting, marketing, and finance emerged as alternatives to the economics major. COBA marched in step with the nation’s best business schools with a business major in accounting in 1966, and other majors followed shortly.

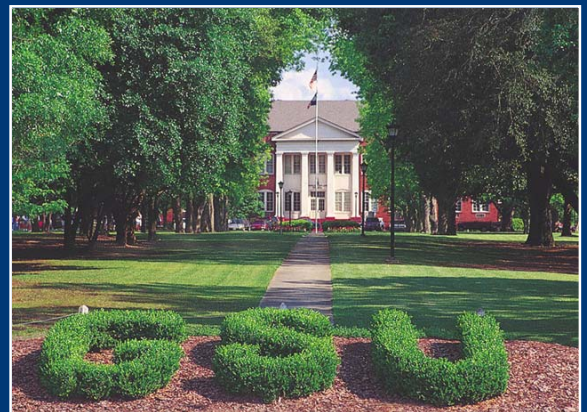
Next was a goal to validate the quality of our business school. The business accrediting agency, now known as AACSB International (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), had established a set of quality standards and a process for achieving accreditation.

In 1977, COBA earned the stamp of quality from the AACSB for its undergraduate business programs. The MBA program was accredited in 1982, followed by specialized accounting accreditation in 1994. In February 2003, the AACSB visited the campus and re-accredited us again, just as it had done each time in the past.

The student body has grown from a handful of business education majors to over 3,000 students who have decided to pursue some area within business as a major.

The leadership in the business school has been remarkably stable. In almost 40 years of existence, COBA has had only five deans. Paul LaGrone (1962 - 1974) was the first, followed by Ori James (1974 - 1986), Carl Gooding (1986 - 2001), Ralph Byington (2001-02), and now Ron Shiffler (2002-).

Dr. LaGrone guided the business school from its infancy to the beginning of separate majors. Dr. James was responsible for the initial undergraduate and MBA accreditation. Dr. Gooding launched the Business Advisory Council, earned accounting accreditation, and led the initiative to construct the new business school building in 1996. Dr. Byington served a year as interim dean until the search for a permanent dean resulted in the hiring of Dr. Shiffler in 2002.



Where We Are

We are fresh off another successful AACSB reaccreditation effort. We are awash in excellent students and produce the greatest number of graduates in the university. With the largest number of majors, we generate the most student credit hours taught per faculty member in the university. Since our inception as a business program, we have graduated over 15,000 alumni with business degrees.



Unfortunately, we are losing ground on the budget front. The appropriations from the state have been decreasing for the last several years as legislators wrestle with declining revenues that translate into budget cuts. Contributions from alumni and friends and investment income have not been able to offset the shortfall from the state.

The economic consequences on campus have been painful: we have lost dollars in our operating budgets, we have lost faculty positions, and we have lost staff support jobs. Meanwhile, enrollments are increasing, setting up a recipe for disaster: more students, fewer faculty, and fewer dollars.

As we look ahead, what we find is that we need to broaden our reputation, to extend our outreach program, to improve our financial base, and to increase quality by the year 2010.

Where We Are Going



President Bruce Grube has challenged the campus to become one of the best comprehensive universities in the country in the next 10 years. COBA intends to do its part to be the “best,” and we recognize that the next level of success will not happen without a good plan and great execution. Our plan is built around five strategies: (1) to create distinctive niches, (2) to engage the business community, (3) to expand COBA’s visibility, (4) to raise endowed funds, and (5) to improve internal operations.

Distinctive

We believe that in order to broaden our reputation we must become **distinctive**. We have breadth with eight undergraduate majors, two graduate programs, and a stake in the statewide WebMBA program. **We need depth.**

In *Accounting* we intend to develop an integrated curriculum around the theme of “forensic accounting.” With ethical scandals dominating the business world, we see an opportunity for our accounting program to thread the concepts of honesty, ethics, and legal issues throughout the curriculum. Not only will we give students a strong foundation in accounting principles that prevent fraud, we will also develop in them an investigative mentality that will help them become future fraud busters.

In *Economics*, we will continue to instill critical thinking skills in our students so that they may be successful in further graduate study. We hope to develop graduate programs in economics building on our unique strengths.



COBA's *Finance* program will continue to offer the general finance degree while allowing

students the choice of specializing in one of two areas of emphasis. The first area will allow the student to take the national certification examination in *personal financial planning*. The second area will prepare the student to pursue employment opportunities in a wide variety of *risk management and insurance positions*.

We have one of the few *Logistics and Intermodal Transportation* programs in the country and we intend to enhance our reputation as a supplier of graduates to the transportation industry. This program will be selective and grow in quality more than in quantity.

The *Management* major will continue to be offered as a generalized business degree along with two strengthened emphasis areas. The first will occur at the intersection of human resource (HR) management and information technology. We will produce HR graduates who are competent in using software packages in the HR field. The other thrust will be on small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Marketing is going to return to its roots as a strong program in sales. We intend to revive that program and create a nationally competitive professional selling emphasis that is focused on business-to-business selling.

Our new *Regional Economic Development* major opens a door for exciting possibilities. We will nurture our unique under-

graduate specialization in non-urban economic development and our niche in regional modeling and interpretation.

Finally, our *MBA* program will require a strategic focus on the Savannah market in light of the development in and around Pooler and the growth of the port. We intend to facilitate minority enrollment in our MBA, to capitalize on the high proportion of African American business graduates we produce.

Engaged

Our second theme is **engagement**. In the “old” days, business schools could teach theory without much interaction with the real business community. Today, this is virtually impossible. Students



are more savvy and potential employers recruit with the attitude that today’s graduate *should be* tomorrow’s productive employee.

We have to produce graduates who can get up to speed immediately in their new careers. To do this, we have to be knowledgeable about current developments in business by being engaged with the business community. We cannot afford to be caught teaching yesterday’s lessons.

Engaged means we talk regularly to accountants, bankers and marketers and invite business people to campus to tell us what challenges their businesses are facing. Engaged means we compete for grants and contracts with organizations that need our expertise for specialized research projects. Engaged also means placing students and faculty in internship programs, or perhaps serving the regional community through memberships in civic organizations.

Visible

Anyone driving down the highway who sees a billboard with “the golden arches” knows immediately that a McDonald’s restaurant is nearby. A symbol such as this is so powerful and so pervasive that we make an immediate word association with the company’s name.

This is called “branding.” Sending a consistent, concise message to the consumer enables a company to build brand awareness and loyalty. The same technique works in higher education.

Harvard Business School, the Juilliard School, or Johnson & Wales University are all “brand” names in their respective disciplines – business, music, and culinary arts, respectively.

We hope to brand the College of Business Administration in the hearts and minds of our target audiences. This requires us to



be more **visible** in the public's eye.

The perception of *how* we are achieving our mission is now as important as the actual act of learning. Billboards, radio commercials, alumni magazines, web pages, interactive CDs, newspaper columns, and press releases are the current tools business schools use to reach stakeholders.

Endowed

Most people believe that because the state of Georgia supports Georgia Southern there is no “need” to contribute dollars to the university.

The first part of that argument is true ... to a point. That point is approximately 42 percent, which is the percent of the university's operating budget that comes from state appropriations. The other 58 percent is derived from other sources. For every \$1 in revenue:

- 42 cents comes from state appropriations
- 35 cents comes from grants and contracts (faculty driven)
- 20 cents comes from tuition and fees (student driven)
- 3 cents comes from gifts and other sources (alumni and friends)

State tax dollars that support Georgia Southern's operations are less than half of what it takes to run the university.

When the state runs into financial difficulties – as it has for the past two years – the result is a budget cut in state appropriations.

Correspondingly, we have increased our income from grants and contracts to help make up the shortfall. But federal and state funding agencies have been cutting back on the amount of grant money available, so these funds are getting harder and harder to obtain.

We have raised tuition and fees, but this has made it more difficult for students to afford a college education. Hence, our best prospect for managing the budget is to increase revenue from money donated to the university and designated for the College of Business Administration. These funds are put into a “savings” account and become part of the university's **endowment** fund. Endowment funds are invested and the interest is used as a revenue source for the university's operations. The larger the endowment, the greater the contribution is to revenue.

Improved

We can't expect you to invest in us unless we get better and better. We have definitive metrics that tell us we are improving. For example:

- the average SAT score of our students is increasing
- the CPA pass rate is increasing
- our research output is increasing
- surveys of employers and alumni show increasing "satisfaction" scores



As legendary football coach Vince Lombardi said, "Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence." We agree. We intend to chase perfection and maybe, by the year 2010, we will catch excellence and be one of the best regional business schools in the country.

COBA's vision for 2010 is to become a premier business school for:

- Prospective students in Georgia
- The regional business community
- Employers

To realize this vision, we must achieve the following:

- Create distinctive programs within disciplines
- Engage the academic and business communities
- Brand the business school
- Raise funds for COBA's endowment
- Improve all aspects of our operations

Alumni and friends – we *need* your support!

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