I. Team Recommendation

A. Accreditation Recommendation:

- Continuous Improvement Review Two to take place in the following year to examine the specific accreditation standards-related problems cited in the Accreditation Review Visit Report, along with the respective reporting expectation, reporting date and the expectations for accomplishments. Concurrence by the Continuous Improvement Review Committee is required prior to official notification.

Note: In all cases, the applicant may file a statement with the Continuous Improvement Review Committee in response to the Peer Review Team Report.


II. Identification of Areas That Must Be Addressed:

The 2009 initial accreditation letter mentioned three areas that needed to be addressed prior to the next continuous improvement review. The school has made progress in all areas.

- Strategic Planning for the Future of Graduate Education
  The School should engage in strategic discussions about assuring continuous improvement in its MBA program, encourage deeper faculty collaboration and ownership, integration between courses, and move the assessment plan to be less linked to individual courses. Georgia Southwestern should dedicate a parallel commitment of ideas, energy, and leadership that have been put in place for the undergraduate degree program to the MBA program; the benefits to the university should justify this commitment, if graduate education continues to be consistent with the mission of the School.
  A graduate committee was created to coordinate assessment and assurance of learning in the MBA program. The committee revises the MBA curriculum, coordinates the learning goals assessments, defines actions to “close the loop”, discusses admission of students, and reviews course offerings. The graduate committee reviewed retention and graduation information and recommended a change in admission standards to more closely parallel sister institutions in Georgia. This recommendation resulted in higher entrance requirements and the virtual elimination of “conditional acceptances”. The committee is also working
with the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Registrar's Office
to create more uniform guidelines regarding acceptance of International graduate
students. The graduate committee has been tasked with integrating the most
recent strategic plan guidelines by looking at the overall needs of stakeholders
and determining how graduate programs fill these needs. It will also be asked to
make recommendations regarding the advisability of continuing to offer both
evening and online courses in light of resources and needs. This study will be
completed by the end of AY 2014.

- Assurance of Learning
  The Assessment Manuals for both the undergraduate and graduate program
  propose to collect AOL data ‘every other year.’ The team recommends that
during the first three years of the initial five year review cycle, assurance of
learning measurements should occur on an annual basis for each learning goal
for both degree programs. This will further embed the process of assessment into
the culture of faculty and the practice of curricular renewal based upon outcomes
assessment.
  Most of the learning objectives have been assessed every year for both the
graduate and the undergraduate programs. SOBA faculty is committed to the
assessment process.

- Faculty Qualifications
  College statements regarding Academically Qualified and Professionally
Qualified faculty should be reviewed and revised using terminology that is
consistent with AACSB annotated standards. Faculty intellectual contributions
should be unambiguously labeled as ‘peer reviewed journal’ articles (PRJs), or
‘other intellectual contributions’ (OICs). Language in the PQ statement should
include any heightened depth or duration of professional experience for PQ
faculty that might be assigned to teach in the MBA program (Standard 10:
Faculty Qualifications).
  Dr. Feng Xu is in charge of keeping track of the PQ/AQ faculty updates. All
faculty members inform him about any intellectual contribution or other activities
related to maintenance of faculty qualifications. This process is designed to
ensure that all faculty members are aware of the contributions or actions needed
to keep the respective qualification, and maintain the 90% of AQ/PQ rate and the
minimum of 50% of AQ rate according to the AASCB recommended standards.
The School of Business Administration (SOBA) has graduate faculty
designations consistent with those of the University as well as those of AACSB.
Dr. Xu’s committee revised the SOBA statements regarding the definitions of
Academically Qualified and Professional Qualified faculty and made it consistent
with AACSB terminology and how these qualifications contribute to the School
mission statement.
Identification of areas that must be addressed during the 6th Year Review citing the specific accreditation standard(s) relevant to the issue(s) to be addressed and the reporting that is required.

We find that the School of Business Administration is deficient relative to Standard 10: Faculty Qualifications. Specifically, the School of Business Administration must hire an Academically Qualified faculty member in Accounting and have a plan in place to hire another Academically Qualified faculty member in Accounting by the end of the 6th Year Review.

We find that the School of Business Administration is deficient relative to Standard 15: Curricular Management. Specifically, the School of Business Administration by the end of the 6th Year Review must develop a report describing how the learning objectives will be measured for the online programs. The report should include an evaluation of the instruments and rubrics currently used in the face-to-face programs and how they might apply to online programs, and, where necessary, the design of new instruments and rubrics for the online programs.

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

A. Situational analysis
Since the initial AACSB accreditation in 2009, SOBA has implemented actions toward the continuous improvement in the quality of education and service offer to stakeholders. At the end of 2010 SOBA changed deans, but the process did not negatively affect the School due to a strong commitment from the faculty members and the short learning curve on the part of the dean because of her long career in the School and her deep involvement in the administrative processes.

The continuing budget provides support for the faculty and staff salaries, supplies, equipment, travel, communications, and other operational and developmental needs of the academic and related programs of the School. The University commits funds to support faculty intellectual contribution activities. The University also provides funds for students' activities including the ENACTUS program (former SIFE), and Study Abroad programs. SOBA budget doubled from fiscal year 2003 to 2012 and the number of faculty increased from 11 to 19.

SOBA produces a comprehensive Annual Report of the Assessment Committee that effectively summarizes the assessment results and makes recommendations for continuous improvement.

In spite of the poor budget situation created by reduced State revenues at the University and across the University System, SOBA faculty continues to present papers at academic conferences, attend AACSB Assessment Seminars and Conferences, and participate in other academic and professional development
activities. In the last three years SOBA faculty members have won University-wide awards for service, scholarship and teaching excellence.

**Advantages**
- GSW has a reputation for “affordable excellence”, tuition and fees are lower than any other senior unit in the system
- BBA in accounting, management or human resource management totally online for students who have completed a two-year degree
- Close ties to the community as many of our community leaders are our graduates.

**Disadvantages**
- Located in a rural area that is not growing
- The University has limited offerings of core classes available online – no science or physical education classes. This results in the School of Business’ online programs being almost exclusively comprised of transfer students, making it difficult to develop alumni connectivity to the University.
- Significantly fewer resources than competitors, creating difficulties in faculty recruitment and retention, and less than optimum technology infrastructure.

**Challenges**
- The changes of the environmental demand have forced the School of Business Administration to invest resources (financial and human) to adjust and fulfill the new needs and realities. The large increase in online students has been met with new technologies, new University learning systems, and new ways to proctor online exams.
- Growth in online programs has led to challenges with balance of course offerings in online and on-campus classes. The biggest challenge in this area is maintaining appropriate class size in online courses. The relatively large class size restricts what faculty can realistically do in terms of interactivity and innovation in assessment methodologies.
- Lack of faculty in some areas, such as Accounting.

**Opportunities**
- With additional faculty, the marketing degree would grow as other programs have, and opportunities exist as well for online collaboration with military installations in the state.
- With additional marketing efforts online programs could see even more growth.
- Addition of core courses online would enable recruiting from a more diverse population than just transfer students.

**B. Changes impacting Eligibility Criteria:** There are no changes affecting the school’s alignment with AACSB Eligibility Criteria A-G.

**C. Strategic Management addressing the following:**
- The mission statement and strategic management plan are adequate, appropriate and reasonably aligned with the mission of Georgia Southwestern State University. Strategic planning oversight and revision is tasked to the Strategic Planning Committee. This SOBA committee reviewed past planning
efforts, the University strategic plan, and the current situation in identifying a set of three strategic goals which will move the School forward. The goals reflect an analysis of the competitive environment, current funding situation, the needs of stakeholders, and AACSB International accreditation guidelines. The latest plan covers the 2011-15 time period and was last reviewed in 2013.

The mission statement was revised during the 2011-12 academic year. The process followed in the change is deemed appropriate as it was begun in the Strategic Planning Committee, given to the faculty for input and feedback (eventually approved by the SOBA faculty), and shown to students and the business advisory group.

The current mission statement commits the faculty to deliver quality programs that provide the following to students completing their program:

- knowledge and skills for their careers;
- ability to enter and succeed in graduate school; and
- foundation for fulfilling their personal potential.

The first two “deliverables” are common to many business schools and it was not difficult to find examples of actions tied to them. The third, however, is very expansive and difficult to tie actions of SOBA to it. A discussion with the Strategic Planning Committee was enlightening. They use this as rationale for getting to know their students well on a personal level. Given the high proportion of first generation college students, this is important at this institution. SOBA needs to improve how they measure this aspect of their mission. For example, SOBA should be more intentional about counting the number and impact of internships, career preparatory activities (resume development, mock interviews, etiquette dinners, etc.), initial job tracking, and career progress. These are the elements meant in helping students fulfill their personal potential.

The strategic plan has identified three strategic goals that the SOBA seeks to accomplish. They are:

- Provide the requisite resources required to retain students currently enrolled in SOBA and increase student enrollment.
- Create academic, business, and community partnerships.
- Maintain accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

In regards to intellectual contributions, the SOBA faculty have published 31 peer-reviewed journal articles in 27 different journal outlets in the five years of this review (Table 2-2 was missing from the Fifth Year Report and is attached to this report). Also, they list 107 total other intellectual contributions during the same period. The level and types of IC’s generated is generally consistent with the mission of the school. The vast majority of the contributions were Contributions to Practice and account for 92.6% of the faculty’s intellectual contributions. The administration supports the efforts of the faculty by providing travel funds for presentations. This support comes from two sources. The initial travel request is made by the faculty of funds available through a University Faculty Development
grant. If denied or an insufficient amount, the faculty may then request travel dollars through the SOBA travel budget.

The intellectual contributions for the SOBA emanate from a substantial cross-section of faculty in each discipline and the mix of research is appropriate to the school's mission. The SOBA faculty published 28 percent of total intellectual contributions in peer reviewed journals, consistent with the school's mission.

- Given the financial issues at the University level identified in the Fifth Year Maintenance Report, it seems doubtful that the financial resources would be adequate for anything other than the modest strategic goals listed in the strategic plan. However, given the importance and scope of the online program, more resources should be spent on ensuring the educational quality of all online courses.

D. Participants addressing the following:
- Comment on:
  - Student admissions policies, trends, support services, identifying any issues or strengths:
    The admission policies are appropriate to the mission of the Scholl of Business Administration. Appropriate support services (e.g., advising services, career services) are available to students. The physical plant provides good technology and teaching spaces and there are spaces for student advising.
  - In regard to faculty sufficiency (Standard 9),
    - The GSW School of Business Administration has an appropriate deployment of participating and supporting faculty over the entire school, the core disciplines, and all programs.
    - There are no non-alignment issues. The School of Business Administration meets the spirit and intent of the student-faculty interaction principles.
    - The School of Business Administration has policies for determining participating status that are based on continuing appointments and involvement with mission driven activities, including faculty governance, student advising both individual and through professional or student organizations, institutional service, curricular development, professional development and outreach activities to external communities.
  - In regards to faculty qualifications (Standard 10):
    The School of Business Administration has an appropriate deployment of participating and supporting faculty over the entire school, across the core disciplines, and across all programs, with the exception of the discipline of Accounting.
    In Accounting the percentage of AQ is 25% and AQ+PQ is 100%. The School of Business Administration was approved to hire two additional faculty members in Accounting, one a PQ faculty member that will not help
the AQ ratio and one Academically Qualified member. The salary approved for the AQ position will make it very difficult to fill it. Given that Accounting is an important discipline and the school offers a major in that area SOBA is not in compliance with the standard.

The policies of SOBA for establishing and maintaining academic and professional qualifications are adequate and appropriate to their mission.

Existing faculty management policies (e.g., hiring, mentoring, promotion and tenure, workload, evaluation and reward systems) are appropriate and ensure the deployment of sufficient and qualified faculty in support of degree programs.

E. Assurance of Learning:

- Assurance of learning is a faculty-driven process in SOBA. The responsibility for this process is assigned to the Assurance of Learning Committee, which is comprised of five faculty members. The committee has a mix of graduate and undergraduate faculty.
- In consultation with faculty, the AOL Committee is charged with developing a structured plan to assess student performance regarding each learning objective in the BBA and MBA programs. Learning goals for the BBA and MBA are measured using a variety of techniques including course-embedded questions, projects, case studies, and major field tests.
- Since the last review, the SOBA has taken some steps to streamline the AOL processes. These improvements included:
  - Using a variety of instruments and rubrics to measure and assess the eight undergraduate learning goals and the seven graduate learning goals.
  - Standardizing all SOBA syllabi with the inclusion of optional information as needed.
  - Requiring virtual office hours for professors teaching online courses.
  - Maintaining the SOBA webpage and keeping it up to date.
- We find that the SOBA has certainly made progress toward satisfactory completion of the standard, but we find that the process for online programs is not yet mature. For example, while assessment results in 2011-2012 indicated large differences in the performance of online students relative to the performance of students receiving instruction in the classroom, the actions implemented were piecemeal in nature. The school has failed to systematically determine if the corrective actions rectified the poor performance of the online students. “Anecdotal information” alone is not sufficient.
- Overall, the AOL process must be revised to assess and measure the performance of the online courses and programs at the undergraduate and graduate level.
IV. Commendations of Strengths, Innovations, Unique Features and Effective Practices

A. Commendations for Strengths, Innovations, and Unique Features:

- Based on student and alumni testimonials, the faculty—student interactions including advising and mentoring make the School of Business Administration faculty appear like one would expect in a private school model. It is clear that this faculty truly cares about the students and goes out of their way to engage them.

- The School of Business Administration faculty appears to be a cohesive group who truly care about their work, their students, and the business communities that they serve.

B. Effective practices:

- The External Program includes the 2+2 program with partner two-year schools. Articulation agreements with schools together with paid advisors (on an incentive scale: more students, more pay) at each partner campus provide a seamless transition of transfer students to GSW. The impact of this program has been very substantial to the school as these transfer students account for 25-30% of their student body.

V. Opportunities for Continuous Improvement

A. Relevant to the accreditation standards:

- The mission seems generic and overly broad with no articulation of the distinguishing features of SOBA or of the students and other stakeholders. Additionally, the vision statement reads much like the mission statement and is not very ambitious. (Standard 1)

- Most of the curricular interventions reported by SOBA are at the micro level rather than program wide. In particular, interventions are often related to the course where the learning goal is assessed rather than for the program as a whole. (Standard 15)

- In the MBA program, learning goal targets are met regularly, yet SOBA has no plan in place to revise learning goals or benchmarks. Stating that all is fine is not continuous improvement. (Standard 15)

- With the continued growth of online programs and faculty often teaching 7-10 courses per calendar year, faculty sufficiency issues might arise in the future. (Standard 9)
B. Consultative report on matters not related to the accreditation decision:

- In the current budgetary situation, it appears unlikely that business schools in general will be able to achieve their margin of excellence using only state funds. SOBA should be proactive in identifying, planning, and obtaining the needed resources from external sources if internal sources are not readily available.
- All juniors and seniors should be encouraged to devote up to 25% of their time on job search activities. Seniors majoring in human resource management might take the lead in sharing effective job search methods with other business majors.
- Some consideration might be given to appointing a faculty assistant to the dean of SOBA for coordinating class schedules, acting as a liaison to the faculty and staff and serving as general support to the dean.

VI. Visit Summary

A. Descriptive Information: Brief description of the school including its size and institutional setting

Georgia Southwestern State University is the smallest senior unit of the University System of Georgia. The University was founded in 1906 as the Third District Agricultural and Mechanical School. In 1964, the College became a senior unit of the University System, conferring its first baccalaureate degrees in June of 1968. In July 1996, the Board of Regents authorized state University status, and the institution became Georgia Southwestern State University.

Georgia Southwestern State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Business Administration, Master of Education, and Master of Science.

The School of Business Administration is one of five academic units at Georgia Southwestern State University reporting to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. As a unit of the University System of Georgia (USG), Georgia Southwestern State University receives annual funding for USG through appropriation by the State of Georgia. Funds are then allocated to the School of Business Administration through the University’s budget process. The Dean of the School of Business Administration is responsible for all administrative activities of the School.
B. Degree Programs: List of all degree programs included in the accreditation review and the number of graduates in the previous year for each program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Degree Program</th>
<th>Major(s), Concentration(s), Area(s) of Emphasis</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBA</td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Comparison Groups:

Comparable Peers:
- Louisiana State University Shreveport
- Francis Marion University
- University of South Carolina Aiken
- University of Montevallo
- Fayetteville State University
- Northwestern State of Louisiana

Competitive Group:
- Columbus State University
- Albany State University
- Macon State University
- Georgia College and State University
- University of West Georgia

Aspirant Group:
- Columbus State University
- Valdosta State University
- University of West Georgia

D. Visit Team Members:

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E. Review Visit Schedule:
Agenda for AACSB Peer-Review Team

Sunday 2/9
4:30 : Peer Review Team meeting Meeting room Windsor Hotel
6:30 - Reception and dinner: Peer review Team, School of Business Administration Stakeholders

Monday 2/10
8:15 - Tour of facilities, working area: Dr. Wilson
8:45 – Meet with Strategic Planning Committee: (Dr. Mike Fathi chair, Dr. Cheokas, Dr. Szmedra, Dr. Maldonado, Dr. Flynn)
9:30 - Meet with undergraduate students in Current Issues in Human Resources class, meet with graduate students Room 205 BHP
10:00 - Break
10:15 – Meet with AOL coordinator (Dr. Maldonado) /committee, AQ/PQ chair (Dr. Xu): BHP Conference Room
11:00 - Meet with non-tenured faculty: (Dr. Park, Dr. Flynn, Dr. Grimes, Dr. Bennett, Dr. Cheokas, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Perry, Mr. Warther) BHP Conference Room
12:00 - Break
12:15 - Meet with tenured faculty / lunch: (Dr. Howell, Dr. Heshizer, Dr. Szmedra, Dr. Fathi, Dr. Xu, Dr. Dawn Valentine, Dr. Randall Valentine, Dr. Maldonado, Dr. Stovall) Faculty Dining Room
1:30 Meet with Internship coordinator (Dr. Bennett), career placement director (Mrs. Fowler), former career placement director (Mrs. Fathi) **BHP Conference Room**

2:00 - Break

2:30 - Meet with Graduate coordinator (Mrs. Robinson) /committee members : **BHP Conference Room**

3:15- Meet with External Program director (Mrs. Perry) external coordinators (Mrs. McKinley, Mr. Carson, Mrs. Crews, Mr. Gribbon, Mr. Stewart): **BHP Conference Room and ClearSea**

4:00 - Peer Review Team meet to discuss findings **BHP Conference Room**

5:00 – Peer Review Team return to hotel for working dinner, preparation of report

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**Tuesday 2/11**

8:30 - Meet with Dean: **BHP 213**

9:30 - Meet with Vice President of Academic Affairs( Dr.Adler) , President (Dr. Blanchard) **President’s Office**

10:00 Depart for Atlanta

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**F. Materials Reviewed:**

- Curriculum Vitae for Participating Faculty
- Documentation for Supporting Faculty teaching Spring semester 2014
- Curriculum Sheets for BBA majors, MBA, minors
- GSW Faculty Handbook
- GSW Student Handbook
- Sample meeting minutes from SOBA committees
- Sample Teaching Circle Minutes
- AACSB Fifth Year Maintenance Report with appendices
- Recent Assessment Reports
- Articulation Agreements
Table 2-2:
Five-Year summary of Peer Reviewed Journal and Number of Publications in Each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Reviewed Journals</th>
<th>Number of Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy of Business Disciplines Journal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy of Marketing Studies Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Issues Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annals of Applied statistics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Stochastic Models in Business and Industry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Journal for Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development International</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Journal of Health Informatics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Markets and Companies: Analyses and Actuarial Computations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Accounting, Information Science, and Leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Business, Marketing, and Decision Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Humanities and Social Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Risk Assessment and Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of The Academic Business World</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Business Case Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Business and Economics Research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Business Ethics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Consumer Marketing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of International Business Management &amp; Research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of the Academy of Financial Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Organizational Management Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Health Dialog</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives in Health Information Management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Higher Education and Self-Learning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Review of Asian Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Business Renaissance Quarterly</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>