

**University of Montana
College of Business**

Strategic Plan

2018-2026

May 1, 2018
(updated November 2022)

Approved by COB Faculty and Staff on Friday, November 18

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*“Above all, try something”
-FDR*

Preamble

In 2018, the Strategic Planning Committee was charged with envisioning a new way forward for the College of Business. The resulting document grew out of the belief that we must throw out assumptions and re-conceptualize what is possible in business education. At the same time, the ideas in the document were informed by awareness of those things we do well and of those areas in which we seem to operate on autopilot.

At the heart of COB is a student-centric and collaborative culture. The 2018 Strategic Plan was adopted prior to a major disruption to higher education, the COVID-19 pandemic. That plan was prescient in some respects, such as increasing technology that facilitates distant connections with students and guest speakers. In February 2022, the Dean called a diverse committee together to review how the plan should change as we emerged from the pandemic. This was not a full strategic planning process but did result in some important updates and a fresh view of the plan in a changed environment.

We have accomplished many things, even throughout the pandemic, largely because we have been guided by this robust strategic planning document. Throughout this document, the original plan language has been edited for brevity and updates provided as of October 2022. Discrete “to do” steps have been added throughout the plan. An appendix summarizes these steps. An internal document notes those responsible for each of the steps. The Dean intends to launch task forces and provide specific requests of departments and committees to continue making progress.

We presented a draft of the updated plan to advisory boards and faculty in April 2022. After final updates were incorporated in October 2022, the updated plan was approved by COB faculty and staff on November 18, 2022.

Vision, Mission, Value Proposition, and Brand Pillars

The following vision, mission and value proposition present the outcomes we aim to achieve with this strategy. Our four brand pillars act as guiding principles that inform our educational method and decisions we must make to enact that method.

Vision

To be recognized as a premier business learning ecosystem while enhancing economic development in Montana and the Northern Rockies region.

Mission

The College of Business creates the opportunity for a better life for our students, faculty, and staff through transformative experiences in and out of the classroom.

Value Proposition

The College of Business at the University of Montana creates transformative, integrated, and student-centric learning experiences, propelling our students to make immediate and sustained impact on business and society. We nurture our students' innate work ethic to develop confident problem solvers and ethical decision makers. We pursue thought leadership and collectively create opportunities for a better life for our students, faculty, and staff.

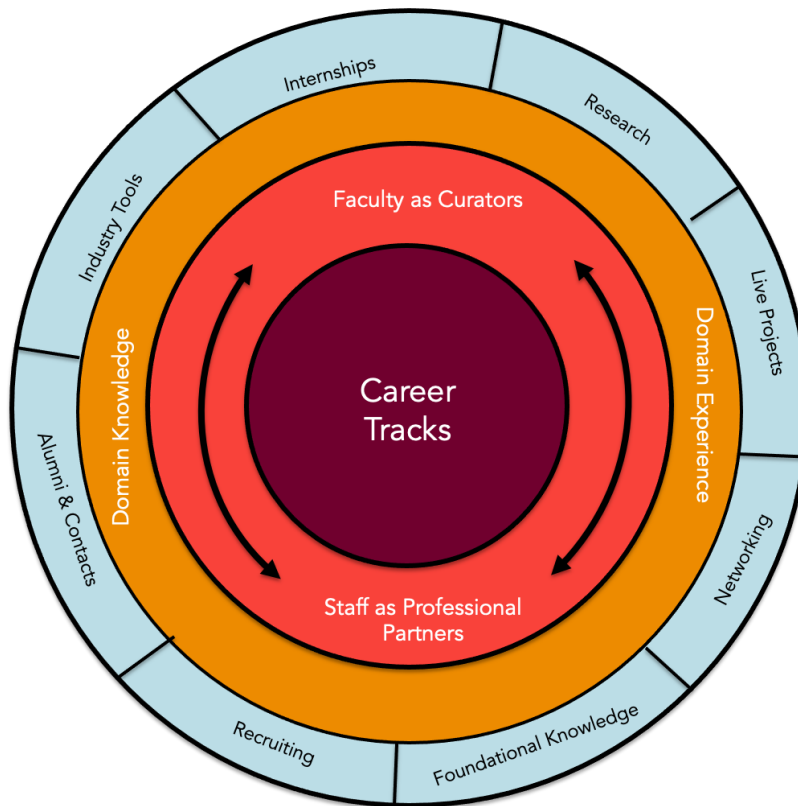
COB Brand Pillars

We express our core values as **brand pillars** that drive our value proposition:

- Students first: We educate the whole person
- Experiential learning: We create experiences that matter
- Thought leadership: We create rigorous and relevant knowledge
- Stewardship: We steward human, financial, and environmental resources.

The COB Method

We use an integrated and holistic approach to business education:



To fully realize this method, the following are necessary:

1. **Integration:** Every course should be an ingredient in a larger recipe, not a box checked and then forgotten. Class by class, our curriculum should foster and integrate the application of knowledge and skills from one course into the next.
2. **Agility:** We need to learn and adapt faster. We must foster innovation in our curriculum. Curriculum must be a constant dialogue between theory and practice.
3. **Resources:** We need to invest in the COB Method. From classroom technologies to more coordinated staff support, to deeper investment in faculty and staff development, we need to secure resources that will help launch our students' careers.
4. **People:** We must strategically fill open tenure track lines and staff openings, create several secure clinical professorships, and invest in a deeper staff. We are committed to diversity and realize its importance and the advantages of having a diverse work environment. We value individual expression and privacy. Our students are described in Appendix 1.
5. **Culture:** We all must look forward and inspire each other to innovate. We must harness our collaborative spirit to challenge the status quo.

How We Get There

The following strategy is structured around four strategic objectives. Under each strategic objective, our tactics are organized into four categories: First Impressions, Organizational Structure, Curriculum, and Facilities. Updates to initiatives since the original 2018 plan was adopted are noted as of October 2022. The original recommendations were also edited to reflect current information and priorities. Tasks to accomplish each initiative have been added.

Strategic Objective 1: Keep students at the center of all we do

First Impressions

Initiative 1.1 Initiate an application process for new business students

Challenge: Incoming UM students have no perception of prestige or sense of belonging to COB when they are admitted to UM. (According to some BAC members).

Solution: Pursue direct admission. Students should apply directly to COB when applying to UM. Once the applicant applies and indicates he or she is interested in business, they will be prompted to complete a “business student application.” Initially, this will not be an application that we use for admissions, but a way to gather information and make connections with interested students. We can then use this data to engage potential students and promote a welcoming spirit from the College of Business. Hence, students will begin to identify with the College of Business from the moment they submit their application to UM.

The long-term vision is to implement a formal COB direct application process. We can then increase the rigor of the process and be more selective. This is a challenging structural endeavor that involves negotiating with the university and developing internal admissions infrastructure. Making the Introduction to Business (BGEN 105) course required (see below) will help in this process by incorporating the application process into this course.

Update: We launched a direct admissions scholar pilot in Fall 2020, with a full class of 20 in Fall 2021 and Fall 2022. We also created “pre” majors for each major (e.g., pre-marketing) to allow those outside of this exclusive direct admissions program to identify with their major field earlier.

- **To do** – Continue to expand the direct admit scholar program as funding allows.

Initiative 1.2 Start a DECA Chapter

Challenge: We currently do not offer a collegiate DECA chapter. Many high school students identify with DECA and are interested in joining a collegiate chapter.

Solution: Establish a COB DECA chapter. This will provide a fluid transition for incoming students and strengthen their affiliation with COB as freshmen. This will also enable effective recruiting in high school DECA chapters across the region. See details at <https://www.deca.org/college-programs/membership-college>.

Update: We attempted this and learned that students are more interested in forging new relationships and identities rather than continuing those associated with their time in high school. Instead, we have added a new initiative (#3).

Initiative 1.3 Provide Career Readiness Opportunities for all Students (added October 2022)

Challenge: Student groups do not focus on marginalized students and their unique needs. It is difficult for a voice of one to feel empowered to speak up, ask for help, or advocate for themselves. Targeted workshops or student groups can facilitate this.

Solution 1: Enhance College of Business support for our chapter of American Indigenous Business Leaders (AIBL). Faculty and staff will provide opportunities to share information about AIBL with students and encourage interested students to connect to AIBL. Administrators will work with AIBL leadership for providing support and connections to enhance AIBL chapter.

- **To do:** Work cooperatively with the AIBL chapter leadership to ensure financial stability.
- **To do:** Provide opportunities for faculty to promote AIBL as an important student group opportunity.

Solution 2: The Leading Out West career workshop is for students in the LGBTIQ+ community. It is in the middle of a three-year pilot period.

- **To do:** Continue to support Leading Out West workshop.
- **To do:** After three years, evaluate the impact of workshop.

Solution 3: Ensure underserved students are connected to internship opportunities and career success activities. Continue to infuse these opportunities and career readiness into BGEN 105S Introduction to Business and other introductory courses.

- **To do:** Identify programs and external scholarships available for underserved students (e.g., KPMG Embark Scholars, PwC Start Internship). Highlight the programs in Intro to Business and other core courses.

Initiative 1.4 Create a Common Exposure to Professionals (added October 2022)

Challenge: Student exposure to professionals is highly dependent on involvement in student clubs or taking classes where faculty highlight professionals in the context of the class. This exposure can come later in a student's academic journey, creating uncertainty of the options available in their fields.

Solution: Create a formal program offering a variety of speakers for students to learn from, and provide this exposure consistently. This may take many forms, such as a COB-wide student club open to all students, a bi-weekly speaker series outside of class, or a "professionals week" where classes are replaced with speakers sessions that students attend.

- **To do:** Form a taskforce to research and recommend a solution that meets the needs of all students.

Initiative 1.5 Restart the Ambassador Program

Challenge: The once-effective COB Ambassador program has gone dormant.

Solution: Bring it back! COB Ambassadors promote goodwill amongst potential students, current students, and professionals. They lead GBB tours and serve as a valuable recruiting tool by providing a welcoming face to potential COB students.

Update: The pandemic interrupted these plans. The Ambassador Program will be restarted in the next two years.

- **To do:** Recruit a COB Ambassador class for Fall 2024 and raise funding to support their work.

Initiative 1.6 Support Student Wellbeing (added October 2022)

Challenge: Nationally, student mental health is an area of focus, particularly coming out of the stress of the pandemic and its interruptions to “normal” student life. UM has campus resources available to students, but students often do not take advantage of those. In 2021-2022, COB housed a Master of Social Work student in the Gianchetta Student Success Center. This was very well received.

Solution: COB and UM will continue to fund and support the COB Wellbeing Support Coordinator, the Master of Social Work student in the Gianchetta Student Success Center. The Wellbeing Support Coordinator will be available to COB students, disseminate resources to faculty and staff annually, and provide a central resource to guide students to campus and community resources.

- **To do:** Seek donor and/or UM funding for the COB Wellbeing Support Coordinator

Organizational Structure

Initiative 1.7 Restructure COB Administration

Challenge: Our current departmental structure creates constraints and internal conflict over the effective and efficient allocation of faculty and resources. This impacts our ability to put students first and to be flexible in response to changing student and market needs. When decisions are made at the department level, it is difficult to develop a curriculum that is truly integrated, maintain focus on the interests of all our students, and be forward thinking.

Furthermore, our *students first* commitment encompasses more than what happens in the classroom. The strength of our program and our majors includes the critical role that our faculty and professional staff play in preparing and connecting students to career paths and opportunities. Proactive engagement with employers and students around career paths does not require departments. Equipping our students for diverse and increasingly integrated career opportunities requires flexible collaboration across disciplines in relation to both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Finally, competing effectively in a rapidly changing environment may necessitate the creation of new innovative classes, programs, certificates, or majors. The current departmental structure may hamper our ability to respond on a timely and effective basis.

Solution 1: Eliminate the current structure of academic departments in favor of two programs: Undergraduate Programs and Graduate Programs. To facilitate this change, we propose the designation of two associate dean positions. First, the Faculty/Research Associate Dean is responsible for FEC, faculty recruitment, faculty oversight and support, and strategy execution. Second, the Academic Associate Dean, supported by Undergraduate Programs and Graduate Programs Directors, is responsible for all aspects of the student experience. The Curriculum and Student Experience Committee (see below) will report to the Academic Associate Dean; however, the two Associate Deans must collaborate closely on curriculum to ensure we provide a transformative experience for our students.

Update: We recognize the need to better elevate the COB priorities (vs. department priorities), integrate curriculum, and create a culture of “success for all,” but the pandemic put this solution on hold. In the revision, we recommend first consolidating the department chair duties and adding area coordinators while retaining departments, primarily for faculty evaluation purposes. This interim mid-step structure requires no approval beyond COB and will provide a sense of whether the one department structure will achieve the desired goals before taking more formal steps.

- **To-do:** Appoint area coordinators and a single department chair, all of whom retain faculty roles of teaching, research, and service.
- **To do:** Involve area coordinators in leadership meetings where decisions are made impacting faculty or students. (added October 2022)

Solution 2: In concert with eliminating academic departments, Unit Standards need to be unified across COB.

Update: We have not yet addressed this.

- **To do:** Appoint a task force to review individual department unit standards and propose a comprehensive single set of unit standards. This task force should also consider incentivizing professional behavior and support of diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices through language in unit standards.

Solution 3: The Business Advisory Councils should be reorganized to better align with our strategic objectives and more effectively capitalize on our advisors' time and talents. The Dean's board or "College Board" should be elevated and grown with an explicit focus on college-level strategic fundraising. This board should meet in a format and frequency determined by the Dean. Current departmental boards should be streamlined and broken up into curriculum and domain-oriented task forces, based on COB majors, that will meet as needed. While the College Board is strategy and development-oriented, these task forces will serve as a critical conduit to practice and inform teaching, research, and student placement. The task forces will most likely be filled with more junior alumni and friends of COB and could provide a useful development pipeline feeding into the Dean's College Board.

Update: The A&F Department began setting aside time to meet as separate finance and accounting groups in fall 2021. Feedback from board members was positive, affirming the value of these area-centric discussions. The timing of the department board meetings continues to be tethered to the Dean's board meetings.

- **To do:** Other boards should explore some breakout time with domain areas having separate discussions.
- **To do:** Allow department and/or area boards to schedule advisory board meetings on an as needed basis (at least once a year), incorporating remote options.

Initiative 1.8 Emphasize "Student Experience" in the Curriculum

Challenge: Curriculum debates and decisions often drift from the fundamental focus of what's best for the students.

Solution: Add "Student Experience" to the title of the curriculum committee, as a reminder of our promise to deliver transformative experiences and experiential learning. The Curriculum and Student Experience Committee will be a rotating, representative body of faculty and staff. Its revised charge is to ensure that COB curriculum fulfills our mission, vision, and value proposition, with particular regard to integrating experiential learning into every major (not necessarily every class).

Update: We added "Student Experience" to the curriculum committee. We have yet to obtain data on the student experience to ensure all students have a common experience with spiraled curriculum. As area-specific faculty know what is best for their majors, this committee is inherently reactive to area-specific curriculum proposals, which is appropriate.

- **To do:** Obtain student experience and assessment metrics to include experiential learning and the effectiveness of a more spiraled curriculum.

Curriculum

Initiative 1.9 Align Core with Value Proposition

Challenge: The core curriculum at COB is currently out of alignment with our proposed value proposition. Many learning experiences happen in isolation and are focused on first major courses.

Solution: Conduct a robust curriculum review. The core must be structured to generate the appropriate learning outcomes at the appropriate times. These learning outcomes should align with our value proposition and career themes and must be reinforced at multiple points in the curriculum. The purpose of this review is not to create syllabi by committee for the core, but rather to gain a holistic view of our students' learning experiences and to better understand what we are doing well and what needs improvement.

Guiding philosophy:

We propose adopting a “principles” approach to core courses, rather than a “first majors” approach. This transition could be difficult as most course materials are developed in the “first majors” framework. In business, a switch from a first major’s approach to a principles approach might mean changes in how some content is currently delivered, shifting it to the major-specific courses. Introducing a principles approach to the core could change when students are introduced to a business discipline. Currently students are introduced to Accounting and MIS in the lower core while Management, Marketing, and Finance are delegated to the upper core. A principles approach may make it possible to move more topics to the lower-core and expose students to majors and disciplines earlier in their academic careers.

Two things should be made clear. First, we want students to have a strong fundamental knowledge of business. Second, we are not proposing reduced rigor. We encourage faculty members teaching core courses to maintain a rigorous approach while shifting the emphasis to principles. We hope this adjustment will also foster development of a more compelling suite of elective courses that are open to non-majors as well as majors.

Update: We have made some progress in the review of the business core. Specifically, we:

- 1) Revised BGEN 105 in addition to creating two new integrated courses: People, Process, and Technology I (BGEN 341) and People Process, and Technology II (BGEN 342). These courses replaced organizational behavior and added a focus on data analytics in addition to Organizational Behavior topics. BGEN 222 was moved to the lower core and shifted from a strict operations management focus to include business models. BGEN 222 also has an additional focus on integrating different disciplines in investigating the different business model options. Faculty teaching these courses presented the new course content and pedagogy in a brown bag meeting, and faculty found it very helpful.
- 2) Updated accounting principles courses: Principles of Financial Accounting (ACTG 201) piloted a course in spring 2022 that emphasized economic transactions and their financial statement impact, with a late introduction to debits/credits. The pilot was very successful, and the course will take this approach in the future. Principles of Managerial Accounting (ACTG 202) has incorporated more Excel and a personal finance module, which was lacking from any core course. Some topics repeated in upper division accounting courses were removed from the course. These changes were well-received.

- **To do:** Monitor the effectiveness of changes made thus far, as well as effectiveness of the common core as a collective curriculum.
- **To do:** Round out our collective understanding of the core by holding brown bags or faculty meetings for faculty teaching other core courses to explain what is in each course and what pedagogy is used.
- **To do:** Complete the review of and move away from “first majors” approach (if necessary) for remaining domain-specific core courses (BMIS 270, BMKT 325, and BFIN 322).

Initiative 1.10 Develop Flexible Core

Challenge: Our current core is too rigid. This alienates students and stifles engagement. Although difficult to quantify, the rigidity of the core could cause longer times to graduate and reduced pursuit of certificates or double majors.

Solution: Reduce rigidity. We need greater flexibility in prerequisites and co-requisites in the core, especially in the progression from the lower to upper cores. Though there is some value in a highly structured core, our current structure creates unnecessary roadblocks for some students trying to progress toward graduation. This will be a primary task of the Curriculum and Student Experience Committee.

Update: The PPT I course effectively moved a formerly upper core course to the lower core, making it accessible to sophomores. Some individual areas have selectively removed the requirement to be a “junior in business” (completed the lower core) to take the course.

Initiative 1.11 Fill Knowledge and Skill Gaps in the Core

Challenge: There are worrisome holes in the core. Some students are deficient in areas like basic Excel skills, applied statistics, leadership/motivation, and communication skills.

Solution: Fill skill gaps. The COB Curriculum and Student Experience Committee should examine if and where these topics are currently taught and develop a solution. A longer-term solution may be to develop these as part of the core courses at COB, or in partnership with other units on campus. If a non-COB course is not fulfilling our needs and faculty of those courses are unwilling or unable to make necessary revisions, the course should be dropped and alternative modes for delivering this content should be identified.

Update: We removed the requirement to complete a computer skills course that was taught outside the college. Instead, Principles of Managerial Accounting, BGEN 222, and the new PPT I and PPT II courses are incorporating some Excel skills. Nonetheless, a more robust Excel toolkit would greatly benefit our students in the long run.

- **To do:** Measure impacts of this change over time.
- **To do:** Explore Excel certifications and what it would take to require some level of third-party certification.
- **To do:** Examine remaining skills noted as worrisome and determine how to address.

Initiative 1.12 Update the 120-credit breakdown

Challenge: Although an interdisciplinary education has the potential to provide a breadth of non-business knowledge, requiring 60 credits outside of COB is an old artifact of AACSB, no longer required for accreditation.

Solution: Relax this requirement. The curriculum committee should propose an alternative policy. Students must still fulfill general education requirements and lower core requirements with classes outside the COB. Eliminating the mandatory 60/60 split will greatly enhance flexibility for students and majors.

Update: We made this change effective Fall 2019.

Initiative 1.13 Optimize the Minor

Challenge: The current business minor is too big (28 credits), too inflexible (no options), and would benefit from a larger online presence. It was constructed to fit within current curriculum offerings (lower/upper core) without requiring additional resources/courses, and it was originally expected to be a pathway to the business major and the MBA. However, education is evolving. Students are seeking more streamlined paths to credentials. Although the idea of using the minor as a pathway to become a business major is a good one, unfortunately, the goal of attracting new majors has not been realized. The result is an unnecessarily onerous and inflexible business minor. The minor has the potential to deliver a highly valued business credential for degrees across campus.

Solution: Make the minor more accessible. We propose using the current MBA foundation courses plus Microeconomics for the minor. This would reduce the credit burden of the minor, dropping it to 18 credits, and eliminate MBA pre-requisite issues for some groups of students (e.g., MBA/Pharmacy). This also enables a flexible format for all courses included in the minor, which is a goal set forth by the online teaching task force. The COB Curriculum and Student Experience Committee would be charged with reviewing this configuration for feasibility and effectiveness. In general, we must evolve to meet the market expectations and needs of our students who do not seek a comprehensive business education, but rather a high-level background in business to supplement their non-COB career path (e.g., journalism, education, etc.). At heart of this proposal is a shift in who we imagine as our audience for the minor.

Update: Effective fall 2021, we now offer a Certificate in Business that packages five streamlined courses covering much of our business core. A student completing the certificate will be poised to enter our MBA program. Enrollment in the business minor has increased to 76 compared to 42 in fall 2018.

- **To do:** Monitor enrollments and the type of student interested in both the certificate and the minor.

Initiative 1.14 Transparently Label Broad-area Courses (added October 2022)

Challenge: Some COB courses are open to any major and have content that is not easily placed in one discipline. While core courses with these characteristics are labeled BGEN, other courses are not. This can deter non-business students from taking the courses. Examples of courses that are “general business” and labeled as such already: Intro to Business (BGEN 105S), Business Ethics (BGEN 220E), and Sustainability Reporting (BGEN 445).

Solution: For courses that (a) have no or few prerequisites and (b) have content not uniquely within the domain of a specific business discipline (e.g., BMIS, BMKT), explore the viability of changing the course rubric to BGEN, within the constraints of the MUS common course numbering guide.

- **To do:** Departments will evaluate their offerings and the MUS common core numbering to identify courses where the BGEN label can be used.

Facilities

Initiative 1.15 Modernize Classrooms

Challenge: Though the Gallagher Business Building is in good shape for its age, our classrooms are not designed for collaboration and technological integration.

Solution: Invest in resources that enable collaboration and experiential learning. Ideas include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Break-out rooms equipped with smart boards and whiteboards.
- Screens in every classroom on which instructor and student content can be seamlessly displayed.
- Wireless projection screens with the ability to connect tablets, PC's, and Macs.
- Technology-enabled collaboration stations in classrooms.
- Moveable chairs and desks in classrooms and study lounges.

Update: We added four "Zoom" rooms, which have microphones, cameras, and technician operators to deliver the most effective hybrid experience for students and faculty, regardless of location. Our largest lecture hall was renovated to update the technology from what was installed when the building was constructed over two decades ago. We are in the design phase of overhauling our computer lab to better facilitate collaboration.

- **To do:** Complete projects underway.
- **To do:** Form a task force to explore how to enhance technology in other rooms using the methods mentioned above.

Initiative 1.16 Brand the GBB Lobby with the COB Identity (added October 2022)

Challenge: Communicating the success of COB graduates and the plethora of career tracks can become too decentralized to be effective. Students – business and nonbusiness – are not familiar with the variety of career tracks possible if they chose a COB major, minor, or certificate. UM campus tours walk right through our lobby, and we are missing the opportunity to share our identity with prospective students.

Solution: Create a dynamic visual experience in the GBB lobby. Electronic screens such as those you see in airports or other venues can communicate individual success stories, happenings of the day/week, faculty profiles, student profiles, and much more. We envision this being screens that rotate information every 20 seconds or so, changing each week or more often.

- **To do:** Work with technology, building, and marketing functions to implement the COB Identity project.
- **To do:** Secure donor funding to support this project.

Strategic Objective 2: Make every moment meaningful

First Impressions

Initiative 2.1 Reinvent Introduction to Business

Challenge: The Introduction to Business class enrolls over 150 students *per semester*, presenting an incredible opportunity to recruit more students to the COB and valuable careers in business. In its current form, this class is not fully realizing the opportunity.

Solution (Phase 1): Showcase the best of COB. We propose each business field (e.g., MKT, MIS, Law, Ops, Acct, Finance, MGT, UMEM, IB) assume ownership of a portion of the class in which an expert faculty member in that field presents a small number of “greatest hits” class sessions. This revised format will inject energy into the course, serve as a prime recruiting pipeline to both the major and the minor, and give freshmen a roadmap for how to be successful in college. We can seek alumni participation in the class as guest speakers. We should also consider representing career development and GSSC in the class. This class could be well-suited to panel discussions and/or senior student guest speakers.

Unlike Phase 1 where a GA administers this class, Phase 2 (below) will require allocation of at least a single, full-time faculty member. That is, while the success of the Phase 1 proposal rests on the willingness of faculty members to accept a modest stipend for going beyond their normal teaching loads, it relies heavily on a GA. Though it is immediately implementable, it is likely not sustainable.

Update: A marketing faculty member revamped the course, including 1-2 days per semester for faculty from each major to come expose the students to careers in their respective areas, starting fall 2019. We also voted to make this a required course for all business majors, effective fall 2020.

- **To do:** Measure whether student engagement and persistence has increased and whether non-business students in the course change their major to business.

Solution (Phase 2): Make the class experiential. Concurrent with the COB Curriculum and Student Experience Committee’s proposed core review, a second phase solution must be developed. This yet-to-be developed version of Introduction to Business should be a required, lower core course for all COB majors and will serve the primary function of getting our students excited about business. Unlike Phase 1, this class will involve a substantial experiential learning component. Students will develop fundamental business knowledge through a fun, interactive, and hands-on experience.

Recommended components of Introduction to Business include:

1. Job shadowing.
2. Balanced treatment of all business majors.
3. Experiential learning – make the students do “real stuff” right away.
4. Senior student mentor.

Issues to consider: Rotation amongst faculty in various business fields is strongly encouraged. If multiple sections are needed, multiple faculty members could rotate sections to deliver different skills and perspectives. Implementation will require thoughtful allocation of teaching loads.

- **To do:** Develop phase 2 of the course, pending metrics on effectiveness of phase 1.

Initiative 2.2 Collect Data on DEI (added October 2022)

Challenge: Educational programs are enhanced when participants feel included, heard, and represented. We must understand how the environment we create impacts students, faculty, staff, and the broader UM community. We don’t know what we don’t ask. To that end, data will inform decisions, but that data is not always readily available.

Solution 1: Continue collecting and studying DEI surveys of students, staff, and faculty. Using either COB administered surveys, or data from UM surveys if meaningful college level detail is available.

- **To do:** Repeat student, faculty, and staff DEI survey. Share results with COB faculty and staff.

Solution 2: Track COB enrollment trends of students from specific underrepresented student populations. Track retention and graduation rates, and full-time enrollment (Enrollment in 15 or more credits) by population.

- **To do:** Collect data comparing enrollment, retention, full-time enrollment, and graduation data, parsed by meaningful underrepresented populations (e.g., vets, women, indigenous people). Share results with COB faculty and staff.

Organizational Structure

Initiative 2.3 Efficiently Allocate Administrative Functions

Challenge: Faculty members are pulled from their core value creation (teaching and research) into numerous administrative functions.

Solution: Designate an operations manager responsible for overseeing budgets to align with strategic objectives, and managing financial affairs, events/scheduling, IT, faculty travel, and facilities. In other words, as we restructure COB, we want to minimize the administrative burden on faculty members to more efficiently allocate their time. For more information on the fit of this proposed position, see Appendix 2.

Update: We renamed the position of Dean's Executive Assistant to be Director of Operations. This position now supervises the events/scheduling position, which also includes facility responsibilities. The IT and financial affairs remain the Associate Dean's responsibility. We have revised the proposed organizational structure to create one department chair (rather than a second associate dean), thus the department assistants should report to that department chair. In addition, we propose retitling two positions to create two assistant deans, one for undergraduate and one for graduate programs.

- **To do:** Retitle Director of Student Success to be the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Programs.
- **To do:** Retitle the Director of Graduate Programs to be Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.
- **To do:** Review reporting lines for other staff positions.
- **To do:** Explore whether our current staffing capacity allows for the Director of Operations to take on additional responsibilities for IT and/or budgets.

Initiative 2.4 Redefine Strategic Planning

Challenge 1: In the past, strategy has been cyclical and fixed. We chart a course for the years ahead, most often the next AACSB accreditation cycle, and lack the agility to recognize and seize emergent opportunities.

Solution: Institute a continuous Strategy and Innovation Committee, to be filled by a rotating, representative body of faculty and staff. The committee's charge is to ensure that COB's strategic planning is ongoing, iterative, and adaptive. Ultimately, the responsibility for implementing strategy lies with the Dean, and this continuous committee will assess results and shape future strategic recommendations. Strategy should also inform our approach to AACSB accreditation, so the requirements of AACSB accreditation should be maintained through a related sub-committee.

Note: Recruitment of international students, facilitation of study abroad opportunities, transfer of credits from international study, and opportunities for growth in international programs are all important topics that we do not attempt to cover in this document. They should be expeditiously tackled by the newly instituted Strategy and Innovation Committee.

Update: The Dean created a task force in spring 2022 to review the existing strategic plans for changes that should be made given the significant shifts in higher education due to the pandemic. A standing committee has not yet been created.

To do: Create a Strategy and Innovation Committee, which will report to the dean.

Curriculum

Initiative 2.5 Offer More Integrative Majors and Certificates Aligned with Career Tracks (added October 2022)

Challenge: Although the current majors support the COB vision, they do not adequately emphasize career tracks.

Solution 1: Each major should develop clear career tracks that align with market demands, including synergies between major and certificate requirements. These career tracks will be integrated in a COB-wide diagram that clearly shows the many options students have so they can understand these options early on. Faculty and advising staff will be trained so they are aware of all career tracks in all majors, better serving students of all majors. This should include a written or online handbook for all career tracks. Finally, each major will evaluate their existing curriculum against gaps in career tracks the market demands, and resources to offer courses to round out a career track should be made available. [This solution is new in October 2022]

- **To do:** Develop 3-4 career tracks in each major using existing curriculum, in consultation with faculty, career staff, advisory boards, and recruiters.
- **To do:** Communicate career tracks to students and faculty using diagrams, handbooks, and other means.
- **To do:** Evaluate existing curriculum in each major to identify gaps preventing them from offering relevant career tracks.
- **To do:** Provide resources to offer the right set of courses in a career track.
- **To do:** After these career tracks are identified and the curriculum set, eliminate superfluous electives.

Solution 2: Accept more electives. Each major should consider accepting more elective courses from other COB majors. Doing so would allow students to develop additional competencies outside of their major and foster a more integrated understanding of business. This would also encourage development of elective courses within majors that generate more cross-disciplinary interest. We recognize that this will not work for all majors or all topics, but several majors already provide this level of flexibility.

Update: Each major currently requires eight courses, which is a mix of required and elective courses. Marketing reduced the number of required marketing classes from five to four (effective fall 2022). Finance has proposed, and COB has approved reducing the number of required finance classes from five to four (would be effective fall 2023). Management already requires only four management classes. Accounting added non-accounting classes to its basket of electives.

- **To do:** Other majors should explore reducing the number of required courses. Revisit electives to determine if the elective can be more inclusive to COB 300+ level course. Ex: Allow MIS majors to take a finance class as an elective.

Challenge 3: Our majors are relatively entrenched and not optimally aligned with the fastest growing job sectors.

Solution: Develop a process of constant evaluation, continuously examining opportunities for new majors in high growth employment areas. One such area is Supply Chain Management. Adding a major in this field would add a highly technical major and another STEM program to COB. The Not-for-profit sector is another high growth area in Montana in general, and Missoula, in particular. This sector presents opportunities across all COB disciplines. Responsibility for developing this evaluation process lies with the Strategy and Innovation Committee.

Update: This will be accomplished when we develop career tracks.

Initiative 2.6 Renovate and Grow Graduate Programs

Challenge 1: The current graduate certificates are overdue for reevaluation.

Solution: Review all graduate certificates. The current certificates in Entrepreneurship and Entertainment Management require only nine credits, three of which can count toward required electives (per grandfathering). Although we do not wish to make credentialing unduly onerous, our concern is whether so few specialized courses provide adequate depth for a Graduate Certificate. Additional certificate options should also be explored. Possible options include, but are not confined to, Healthcare, Sustainability, Not-for-profit, and Human Resources. These certificates could be taught in-house or in collaborations across campus where feasible.

Update: We have not yet explored existing and potential new certificates.

- **To do:** Graduate curriculum committees will evaluate existing certificates for viability and demand.
- **To do:** Graduate curriculum committees will determine if new certificates, or alternatively tracks, can be created using existing course offerings.

Challenge 2: COB graduate programs present an untapped growth opportunity.

Solution: Expand the MBA, MACCT and MSBA programs. Specifically, as COB graduate programs build an increased online presence through flexible delivery systems, structural limits to program growth are less of a concern. In addition, we encourage COB majors to consider additional MS programs, or tracks under existing programs. Such programs should not be initiated, however, without secure funding models, such as RCM, in place.

Graduate Program Enrollments:

	Current (Fall 2022)	Possible with Current Resources	Long-term Target
MBA	208	250	400-600
MACCT	20	40	45*
MSBA	38	50	50

*based on current strategy

Update: The MBA continued to have growing enrollment during the pandemic. The synchronous and asynchronous delivery modes are increasingly divergent in student needs and pedagogy, though the learning goals are the same. The MACct used its first synchronous hybrid delivery mode in fall 2020. The MSBA has attracted primarily part-time employees. The hot job market in accounting and analytics has hampered growth given the increased demand and higher pay those fields are seeing for those with undergraduate degrees. From Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, the change in graduate program enrollments is as follows:

MBA	2.5%
MACCT	-3.8%
MSBA	111.0%

- **To do:** Explore whether grad program structure and/or delivery options fit the goals of each graduate program.

Initiative 2.7 Offer Micro-Credentials

Challenge: COB has enormous untapped potential to extend its value proposition to more students on campus, Montana, and throughout the Northern Rockies. Currently, our programs are excessively focused on degree-seeking students, and therefore we are closed off to significant potential revenue streams.

Solution: Investigate micro-credentials as an avenue to compliment other units on campus and offer continuing education. These post-baccalaureate programs could be developed around the framework of existing certificates or majors or customized in response to employer demand. These programs could use online structures similar to the MBA foundation courses.

Update: The topic of micro-credentials is being evaluated at the campus level. Until they decide how those get approved and curriculum standards that will apply, we are in a holding pattern.

- **To do:** Explore micro-credentials after UM determines the process for those.

Initiative 2.8 Follow Inclusive Educational Best Practices (added October 2022)

Challenge: If faculty are predominately one race, religion, gender, economic class, or sexual orientation, the perspectives we use in teaching can reflect this. We must be intentional to include diverse perspectives and show appreciation for races, religions, genders, economic classes, or sexual orientations different from our own.

Solution: Promote existing cultural leave policy through communication of cultural leave policy to faculty and students (traveling home, participating in customs and ceremonies, funerals of extended family and community).

- **To do:** Provide faculty information about cultural leave policy prior to each fall semester.

Facilities

Initiative 2.9 Invest in Communication

Challenge: Communication with and among students is poor. Students do not reliably check email and Moodle forums are inadequate for collaborative communication.

Solution: Promote the adoption of Zoom, or similar technology platform, throughout COB. The Zoom platform is being implemented in the MBA program. It presents opportunities for more effective communication, collaboration, sharing, and facilitation of different interests across varied groups (e.g., career themes, student groups, etc.). We want student discussions to move beyond the boundaries of specific courses.

Update: All COB faculty now have experience using Zoom for remote or hybrid delivery, whether in programs designed as such or out of necessity due to the pandemic. A new challenge emerged: faculty and staff are using many different platforms to communicate with students, including Zoom, Moodle, Teams, Slack, and email. Students feel overwhelmed with the number of different platforms they need to know, check, and interact with, which varies by class.

- **To do:** Create a task force to recommend a small set of communication platforms that COB faculty and staff will use to communicate with students and each other.
- **To do:** Train faculty and staff on the commonly accepted platforms.

Initiative 2.10 Invest in Flexible Delivery

Challenge: We lack the facilities and expertise for creating compelling and interactive online content.

Solution: Build a creative suite, a studio in which to create innovative and flexible forms of content delivery. As UM adopts the Zoom platform, COB should house one of the few Zoom rooms being built on campus. Hire an expert staff member to facilitate state-of-the art teaching.

Update: COB installed two new Zoom rooms since this plan was adopted. There is a desire to design a room with smart technology using smartboards and other tools to deliver accounting or other technical courses in a distance format. Due to lack of faculty interest, we eliminated the plan to hire an expert staff member.

- **To do:** Create a task force to research technology solutions best suited for technical classes.

Strategic Objective 3: Cultivate and communicate relevant new ideas

First Impressions

Initiative 3.1 Visit High Schools - We are Montana in the Classroom

Challenge: Improve the UM College of Business presence in Montana high schools.

Solution: Engage Montana high schools. Outreach to area high schools indicated there is great opportunity for COB to build connections with area students, teachers, and high school counselors. We could pursue support and funding from "[We are Montana in the Classroom](#)," a University-level program funded by UM's Broader Impacts group, to build increased interaction with prospective students. Participation in this program would provide us with a powerful recruiting presence inside high school classrooms. We should also consider sending out successful alumni into high school classrooms.

Update: This is now an initiative at the campus level. COB will plug into the campus-wide program.

Initiative 3.2 Leverage Regional Alumni Connections

Challenge: Our marketing efforts are not reaching beyond Missoula and expansion is needed to population centers throughout the region (e.g., Billings, Boise).

Solution: Develop a mechanism for alumni in cities to host recruiting events for interested students and parents to promote UM and the College of Business. To implement this program, we will need to allocate resources to support a pilot program with staff who:

- Obtain lists of interested students in target cities.
- Build and curate lists of alumni/BAC in target cities.
- Train alumni on talking points and marketing materials.
- Coordinate logistics for place and time (i.e., coffee shop, community center).
- Send invitations to students and parents.

- Follow up with pilot participants to assess program efficacy.

Costs: Expected COB costs consist of (1) staff time for the tasks above and (2) promotional materials and swag for the alumni to distribute. Alumni hosts would be approached with the understanding that they would fund the event.

Update: UM has hired a VP that oversees both marketing and student recruitment. She is leading the charge on these types of initiatives. COB will plug into the campus-wide activities when they are offered.

Organizational Structure

Initiative 3.3 Define Rigorous and Relevant Thought Leadership

Challenge: The role of Thought Leadership at COB is unclear and lacks coordination.

Solution: Define what it means to be a scholar at COB and institute a continuous Research and Thought Leadership Committee. Our vision for the broad concept of Thought Leadership and the charge of this committee are discussed Appendix 3.

Update: This committee remains reactive in completing tasks when assigned. The centralization of thought leadership outside of the departments will evolve over time as the organizational structure (and unit standards) change. In fall 2022, the Provost indicated the campus would be moving to “percentage of effort” models of workload. This impending change makes it even more important to define what it means to be a scholar at COB.

Initiative 3.4 Increase Capacity for Research (added October 2022)

Challenge: The COB has seen a decrease in faculty lines over the past five years and added new courses without removing existent courses. Faculty teaching loads are not in line with peer institutions, which makes it challenging to hire new tenure-track faculty. UM obtained R1 Carnegie status in spring 2022. These factors converge to create a challenge of maintaining quality research with current teaching loads.

Solution: Transition to 3-2 teaching loads for all research-active faculty. This could start with untenured tenure-track faculty and expand to include tenured faculty who are research-active. This will require defining what “research-active” means, as well as additional funding for the COB to hire adjuncts or lecturers to complement tenure-track faculty.

- **To do:** Charge the Research and Thought Leadership Committee with creating standards for what it means to be “research-active,” including expectations for matching teaching load to various percentage-of-effort permutations.
- **To do:** Obtain approval and funding to support the shifting teaching, service, and research activities.

Facilities

Initiative 3.5 Build a Place for Thought Leadership to Happen

Challenge: COB currently has no dedicated facilities to enable high-quality research.

Solution: The Research and Thought Leadership Committee should seek input from faculty on resources needed to support their research. Some possibilities include buying important datasets, building a behavioral research suite, funding MTurk experimental surveys, etc.

Update: This initiative has not been explored or funded. A survey of research needs was done five years ago. It needs to be completed again. Funds to support research needs must be raised.

- **To do:** Research and Thought Leadership Committee will obtain faculty input on how research can be supported.
- **To do:** Obtain funding to support the research needs of faculty.

Strategic Objective 4: Steward Human, Financial, and Environmental Resources

First Impressions

Initiative 4.1 Elevate the Importance of Stewardship

Challenge: Stewardship is a distinctive ethic in our region's culture, and the culture of the university as well. Similarly, people at COB care deeply about serving a mission greater than themselves. Fortunately, this ethic is in high demand in various sectors of the local, regional, and national job markets. Prioritizing social responsibility is recognized and valued by today's students.

Solution 1: Publicize the importance of stewardship within COB, including curriculum options in this area.

- **To do:** Include the Sustainable Business Strategy Certificate in the COB Identity project.
- **To do:** Include professionals working in stewardship as guest speakers, including those speaking to the new COB-wide club or speaker series.

Solution 2: Elevate this core aspect of our culture and drive related opportunities for our students. Though this strategic plan does not build out specific recommendations for how to do this, stewardship (sustainability, non-profit leadership, etc.) represents a tremendous opportunity. We have the passion and people poised to execute.

Update: The two faculty who were most closely aligned with the Sustainable Business Certificate have moved into administrative roles or retired.

- **To do:** Identify a COB faculty member passionate about the topic and the certificate.
- **To do:** Curriculum committees or departments will compile a menu of how stewardship is included in the COB curriculum.

Curriculum

Initiative 4.2 Reinvigorate the Sustainable Business Strategy Certificate

Challenge: Our Sustainable Business Strategy Certificate has few students opting to complete it. It currently does not have a faculty champion.

Solution: Evaluate developing stewardship classes, credentials and/or a career tracks that equip our students to excel in careers that embrace sustainable principles and business models. Consider stewardship as an additional career theme that prepares students to work for non-profits, health care, sustainable

business, etc. Significant opportunities exist to capitalize on programs, capabilities, and expertise both on and off-campus, including:

- COB's existing certificate, classes and faculty expertise in sustainability and sustainability reporting.
- Programs and resources under the direction of Scott Mills, Associate VP of Research for Global Change and Sustainability
- College of Forestry and Environmental Studies programs
- Non-profit administration minor/programs
- Master of Public Administration program
- Alumni, recruiters, and Montana businesses/organizations with a strong focus on stewardship principles

Update: We have not yet made progress on this initiative, while entry-level career opportunities in ESG (environment, social, and governance) positions are growing. In fall 2022, the Dean formed a task force to review the certificate requirements to better align with current career tracks in this area.

- **To do:** Complete the certificate review to ensure it includes the classes most appropriate for today's focus on ESG programs in business.

Organizational Structure

Initiative 4.3 [Get Involved in Campus Sustainability Efforts \(added October 2022\)](#)

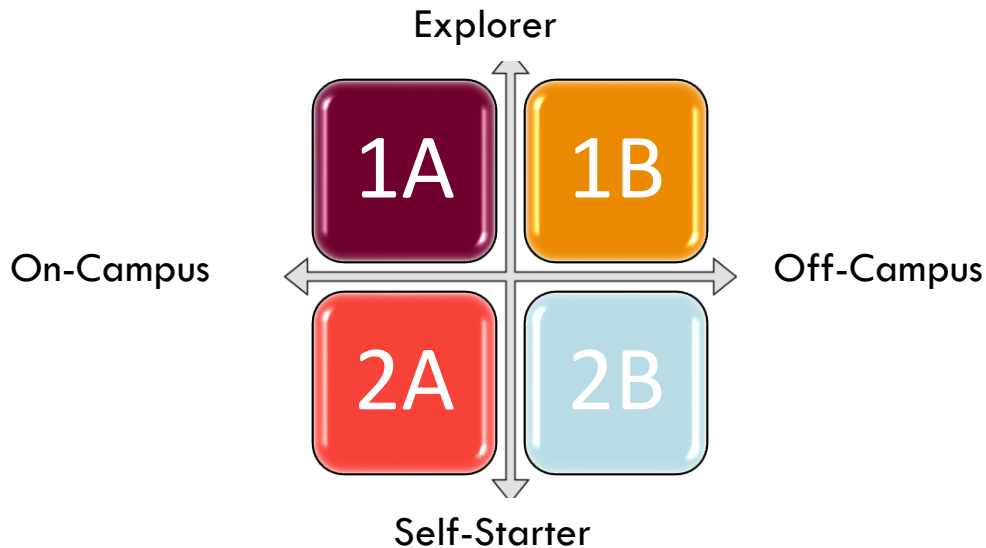
Challenge: UM has a Sustainable Campus Committee that includes administrators, staff, and faculty. The COB does not currently have representation on this committee, which creates a disconnect between campus efforts and what we can contribute to those efforts.

Solution: Remain connected to this committee, and communicate this committee's efforts to COB students, faculty, and staff.

- **To do:** Identify an administrator, staff person, or faculty member to serve on this committee (as of October 2022, there remain openings for staff).

Appendix 1: Target Students

Students are the primary beneficiaries of our value proposition; hence we focus on the benefit requirements of two broad groups of students and two delivery modes.



Segment 1: The Explorer/Big Sky Bound

Students seeking a better life right now, looking for purpose and the opportunity to have an impact while experiencing the “last best place” (in and out of state, traditional college students, financially stable, location oriented).

Positioning Statement: *To the Explorer, the College of Business at the University of Montana creates the best opportunity to find a passion and develop that passion into a career because of our students-first, experiential focus, culturally vibrant community, and spectacularly beautiful setting.*

Segment 2: The Self-Starter/Home Grown

Students seeking an opportunity for a better life (1st generation college students, veterans, tribal members, non-traditional students, cost-conscious, likely in state).

Positioning Statement: *To the Self-Starter, the College of Business at the University of Montana creates the most actionable and direct path to a better life because of our relentless focus on successful student experiences in and out of the classroom.*

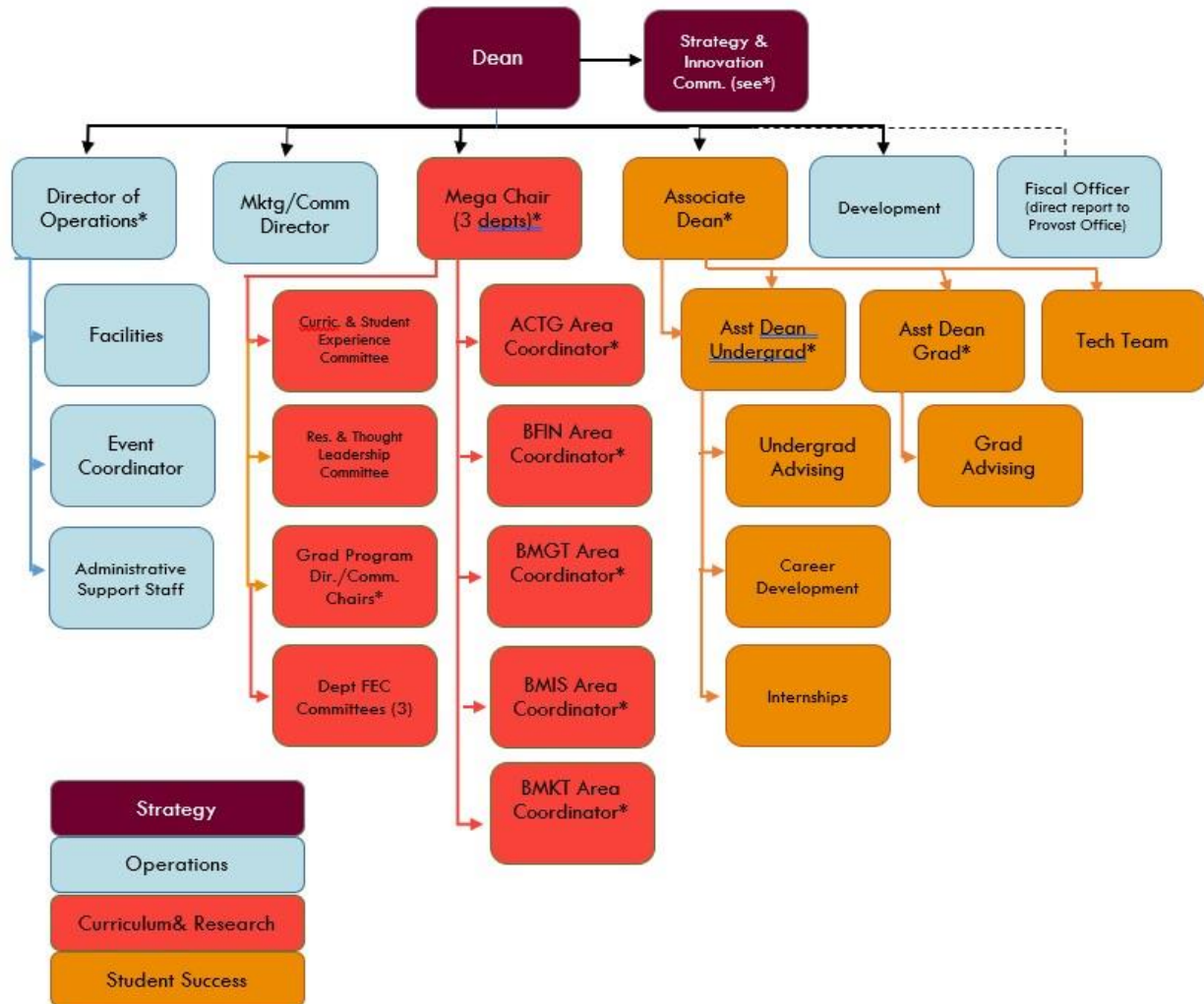
Delivery Mode A: On-Campus

Students from both segments may desire to be in a classroom with their peers and faculty, interacting face-to-face. Explorers often take full credit loads, and being on campus is preferable to being on a screen for 15 hours a week. Relationships with peers are important to them. Self-starters may prefer on-campus courses, especially in courses with in-class discussions and group work. They have more experience with interpersonal interactions.

Delivery Mode B: Off-Campus

Students from both segments may desire options to complete a course from an off-campus location. Explorers are more likely to be located in Missoula but desire the convenience of “attending” class from their homes or completing coursework on demand. They are busy with college life, enjoying our natural environment, and learning how to balance coursework with these activities. Self-Starters often balance work, families, and finances. The off-campus delivery mode may be their only access point to college. This is especially important for single parents and lower income students who must work full-time during the day.

Appendix 2A: Mid-Step Organizational Structure (October 2022)

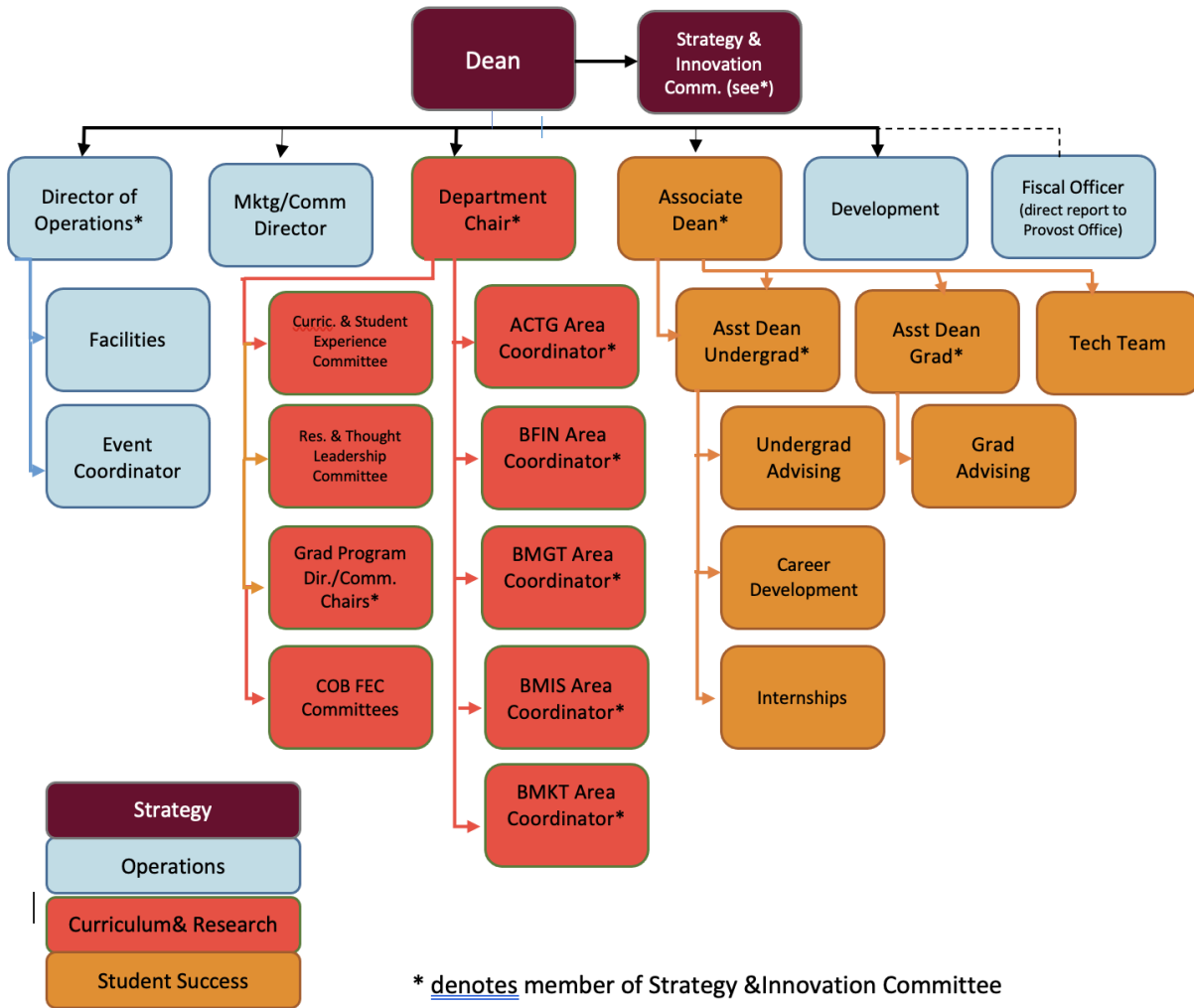


*denotes member of strategy and innovation committee

Note 1 : This organizational chart does not list every position in the COB but is organized around functions.

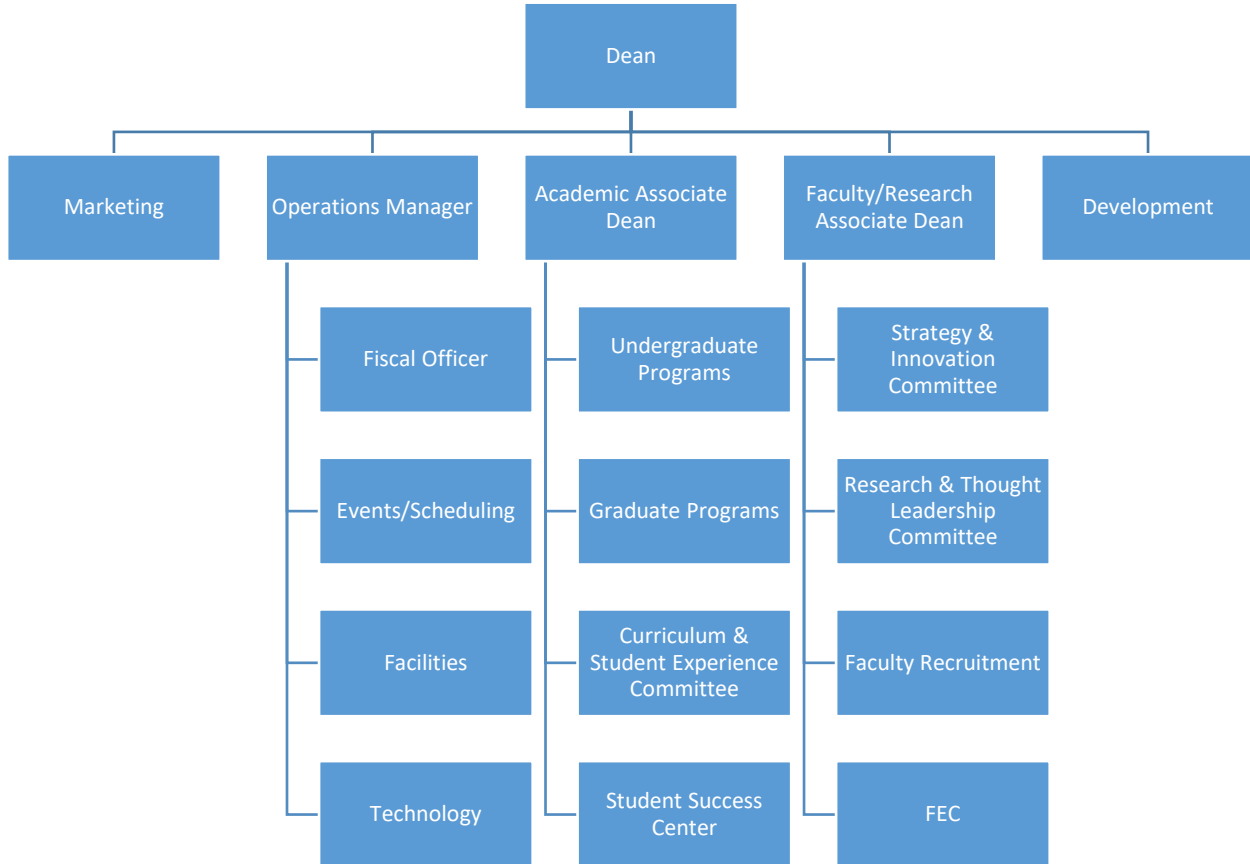
Note 2: When we move to a single department, the only change in the above structure is the Mega Chair becoming the sole department chair and the three Department FEC Committees becoming a single FEC Committee (see Appendix 2B).

Appendix 2B: Proposed Organizational Structure (full step)



Appendix 2C: Proposed Organizational Structure (original plan)

[this proposed structure and position descriptions are retained here for reference]



DEAN

- Lead the College and engage with University leadership, external stakeholders, and alumni
- Develop strategy
- Provide guidance and direction to Associate Deans and Operations Manager
- Oversee Fundraising; Marketing & Communications
- Facilitate the Development & Student Recruiting Advisory Council

OPERATIONS MANAGER

- Oversee budgets, financial affairs, events/scheduling, IT, and facilities

ACADEMIC ASSOCIATE DEAN

- Oversee academic programs that are aligned with COB's vision, mission, and value proposition.
- Create and sustain the transformative student experience.

Responsibilities:

- Oversee Undergraduate Programs, Graduate Programs, Curriculum and Student Experience committee, Assessment, International Programs, and Student Success Center
- Support COB pillars and career themes in collaboration with Director of Student Success Center
- Determine faculty teaching assignments in collaboration with Faculty/Research Associate Dean
- Oversee class scheduling
- Coordinate course evaluations
- Develop teaching methods and resources
- Manage and respond to student complaints/concerns
- Facilitate the Curriculum and Student Experience and Career Development and Internships Advisory Councils

The Student Success Center facilitates all aspects of the student experience, including:

- Student recruiting
- Admissions/enrollment
- Advising
- Career development
- Internships and experiential learning opportunities
- Scholarships

FACULTY & RESEARCH ASSOCIATE DEAN

- Coordinate the recruitment and motivation of a faculty body whose skills and interests are equipped to deliver COB'S curriculum and whose research and service interests, and activities are aligned with COB'S vision, mission, and value proposition.

Responsibilities:

- Oversee faculty tenure, progression, retention, and performance appraisal in conjunction with Dean
 - Oversee Strategy and Innovation Committee and Research and Thought Leadership Committee
 - Oversee AACSB process in collaboration with Strategy and Innovation Committee. Aim to develop and implement strategy first, then follow up to integrate AACSB requirements
 - Maintain Unit Standards
 - Oversee faculty recruitment (subject to Dean approval)
 - Determine faculty teaching assignments in collaboration with Academic Associate Dean
 - Provide guidance, oversight, and support to faculty research
 - Facilitate Strategy and Innovation Advisory Council
-
- Note: We are severely understaffed. Our wonderful staff members have been incredibly flexible in triaging tasks as needed. As a result, people are doing tasks that don't really match the strategic directives of their positions. As soon as funding becomes available for COB to hire additional staff members, we recommend taking the opportunity to reassess responsibilities to ensure that all tasks are allocated strategically and with maximum efficiency.

Appendix 3: Research at the College of Business

[updates as of October 2022 incorporated]

The primary operationalization of **Thought Leadership** is transformative academic research. It serves our mission in three ways:

1. Research improves lives - it helps people make better decisions and create more effective policies.
2. Research contributes to our rankings and reputation (both external and internal to UM).
3. Research active faculty members often excel at teaching.

Tension between research and teaching is a feature of our system, not a bug. Balancing this tension is a team effort and a one-size-fits-all approach misdirects the strengths and weaknesses of our diverse faculty.

Current COB Baseline Expectations

All faculty members are expected to maintain their scholarly qualifications as stipulated by AACSB. In turn, COB will prioritize support for this core job function by paying for association fees, conference travel, appropriate journal submission fees, and other base research expenses. **The current level of support for research is not consistent with this basic compact.**

In the following sections, we present a broad vision of the cultural, structural, and resource investments we recommend clarifying the role of research at COB.

Structural Constraints to Change

Our current structure creates significant barriers to change. Our unit standards define the quality and quantity of research required to achieve promotion and tenure. Teaching loads, however, are defined by the Dean. Any attempt to raise research expectations under the current system cannot be done in a holistic fashion. The system puts faculty members, particularly pre-tenure faculty members, in the position of negotiating against themselves. We would like to see a flexible teaching load system that does a better job of incentivizing high quality research, while protecting junior faculty members and supporting senior faculty members who often carry a disproportionate service load. The path to negotiating that is unclear.

*Update: In early fall 2022, the Provost announced a move to “percentage of effort” with respect to teaching/research/service, a move requested by OCHE. We have been told that this will allow a flexible teaching load system, but the map of the teaching load to teaching percentages has not been agreed upon internally. Further, time devoted to teaching one course is highly dependent on a multitude of factors (e.g., new prep, course level, GA assistance, enrollment, nature of pedagogy). **It is important that this POE model reflect the reality of time devoted to teaching, research, or service and not just a rote formula based on an arbitrary assumption of the time it takes to teach one course.***

Rigor and Relevance:

We have a mix of interests and ambitions situated in a collegial culture that fosters a unique brand of academic freedom. Some faculty are interested in advancing theory, others focus on informing practice, while others work to improve pedagogy. All add value to COB and should be supported.

Update: UM achieved R1 status in early 2022. Because UM is a doctoral institution, R1 status is largely driven by doctoral degrees granted and the level of external research funding received. The COB does not

grant doctoral degrees and receives only a small amount of external research funding. Nonetheless, it is possible external constituents (e.g., accreditors) may expect COB research quality and quantity to elevate as a result of the institution's R1 designation. If raising COB research standards is the goal, resources are needed to do this.

Rigor and relevance vary across and within these three types of research. Rigor and relevance are the guardrails and faculty are free to pursue their interests and passions with these parameters in mind. Research published in an A journal is likely rigorous, but that does not necessarily mean it is relevant. Similarly, pedagogical research is likely relevant, but that doesn't mean it is rigorous.

What is Rigorous? Rigor is inadequately defined in our current system. Unit standards of the various departments require three peer-reviewed papers every five years. AACSB has encouraged COB to be more specific and selective with both research quality and quantity. We strongly value academic freedom and want all faculty members to have multiple acceptable outlets in which to publish, faculty members should be encouraged to aim for higher quality journals. No journal list or ranking system is perfect, but collectively these ranked lists provide a good starting point for establishing journal quality. We therefore recommend that all COB researchers strive to publish in a journals classified within the top three categories by the [ABDC](#), [ABS](#), SCImago, or other appropriate journal list. **To be clear, we do not recommend raising the standards of research unless the proper resources are provided from the University or College of Business (see resource requirements above).** In line with AACSB standards, we consider intellectual contributions anything that makes a positive impact on business theory, teaching, or practice.

Additionally, faculty members should be free to target alternative outlets, provided they can make a case for the outlet's quality. If a publication is not on one of these lists (e.g., a journal from a different field), the researcher is welcome to make a compelling case for a publication's rigor with metrics like Impact Factor, acceptance rate, SCImago rating, eigenfactor, etc. We also encourage interdisciplinary research between departments and across campus. It is up to the faculty member to justify the quality of the publication if that target journal is not in an appropriate list of journals as mentioned above.

Update: The departments are on different schedules for unit standards updates. Accounting & Finance updated their unit standards in 2021-2022. To encourage reaching for high quality journals, A&F now counts one A-level peer review journal publication as two lower-level publications. This change was made after COB changed its faculty qualification standards used for accreditation in the same fashion.

What is Relevance? Relevance should be more explicitly defined in our unit standards and our culture. Relevant research should change business practice or pedagogy and improve lives. We encourage COB scholars to pursue research questions that align with our external mission, and internal value proposition and brand pillars. We also encourage a more active interface with regional businesses, COB alumni, donors, and other appropriate partners in the research process (problem identification, data collection, etc.). In addition to establishing relevance, this might also catalyze funding opportunities.

As a critical complement to the traditional refereed journal publication process, researchers are strongly encouraged to translate their findings into a form and format suitable for a non-academic, business audience. These activities could include writing a follow-up article for outlets like [Harvard Business Review](#), Sloan Management Review, [The Conversation](#), or other similarly accessible platforms, including local and regional outlets. In addition, faculty members are encouraged to cultivate their reputations as experts on issues relevant to practice. This can be done through media appearances/comments as well as invited speaking and teaching. Engagement in these activities will elevate the impact of our work, deepen our connections with the community, and enhance the standing of COB on and off campus.

Implementation

A Research and Thought Leadership Committee should be reconstituted and issued a new charge:

1. To develop a recommended set of unified COB unit standards that reflect the Thought Leadership pillar as outlined above.
2. To specify and/or develop appropriate metrics for rigor and relevance.
3. To oversee a system similar to the Spring 2017 fellowship/professorship application process, with a more explicit emphasis on demonstrating rigor and relevance in the application.
4. To establish and oversee a research grant application process. The purpose of these grants is to sustain research activity and invest in potential, be it the research agenda of an up-and-coming scholar or the desire of a senior faculty member to reengage in research in the face of a heavy service load. We therefore recommend creating two broad types of grants:
 - a. Early career: grants for junior scholars developing a promising research agenda. Grants could come in the form of a salary enhancement, summer support, research budget (travel, data, etc.), or a course buy-out.
 - b. Late career: grants for senior faculty launching new research streams. Grants could come in the form of salary enhancement, summer support, research budget (travel, data, etc.), or a course buy-out.

The committee should be made up of a rotating, diverse set of faculty, fluent in the various categories of research.

Research-Teaching Balance

This is largely a false dichotomy. The winners of our teaching awards are regularly our most active researchers; however, our 3-3 teaching load - a decidedly teaching-heavy work allocation – impedes research activity. A faculty member seeking a lower teaching load is not looking to work less, just work differently. Faculty members wanting to shift their work allocation more toward research should drive that ambition by pursuing funding to buy down teaching. COB, in turn, should support this flexible work allocation in four ways:

1. Fund course releases internally with grants and fellowships. We ask the Dean to place high priority on fundraising for additional and more secure grants and fellowships.
2. Provide administrative guidance and support for grant searches and applications.
3. Encourage and recognize interdisciplinary collaborations with academic areas traditionally more reliant on grant funded research.
4. Consider a flexible, individualized teaching load system.

Update: When we move to the POE model of determining loads, the option to reduce the teaching portion to pursue research or service should be retained (e.g., fellowship buyouts, administrative assignments). As noted above, the POE should reflect the actual time devoted to these responsibilities.

Appendix 4: Strategic Goals and Tasks

Strategic Goal #	Task
1.1	Continue to expand the direct admit scholar program as funding allows
1.3	Provide opportunities for faculty to promote AIBL as an important student group opportunity.
1.3	Continue to support Leading Out West workshop.
1.3	After three years, evaluate the impact of Leading Out West workshop.
1.3	Identify programs and external scholarships available for underserved students (e.g., KPMG Embark Scholars, PwC Start Internship). Highlight the programs in Intro to Business and other core courses.
1.4	Form a taskforce to research and recommend a speaker series, COB-wide club, etc. that meets the needs of all students
1.5	Recruit a COB Ambassador Class for fall 2023
1.6	Seek donor and/or UM funding for the COB Wellbeing Support Coordinator
1.7	Appoint area coordinators and a single department chair, all of whom retain faculty roles of teaching, research, and service
1.7	Involve area coordinators in leadership meetings where decisions are made impacting faculty or students. (added October 2022)
1.7	Appoint a task force to review individual department unit standards and propose a comprehensive single set of unit standards. This task force should also consider incentivizing professional behavior and support of diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices through language in unit standards.
1.7	Other boards should explore some breakout time with domain areas having separate discussions.

Strategic Goal #	Task
1.7	Allow department and/or area boards to schedule advisory board meetings on an as needed basis (at least once a year, incorporating remote options).
1.8	Work with our current dean and Provost to avoid the campus-level reorganization reducing resources and attention devoted to business programs, students, alums, and related fundraising.
1.9	Obtain student experience and assessment metrics.
1.10	Monitor the effectiveness of changes made thus far, as well as effectiveness of the common core as a collective curriculum.
1.10	Round out our collective understanding of the core by holding brown bags or faculty meetings for faculty teaching other core courses to explain what is in each course and what pedagogy is used
1.10	Complete the review of and move away from "principles" approach (if necessary) for remaining core courses: BMIS 270, BMKT 325, and BFIN 322.
1.12	Measure the impacts of eliminating CSCI 172 (i.e., Excel) over time
1.12	Explore Excel certifications and what it would take to require some level of third-party certification
1.12	Examine remaining skills noted as worrisome and determine how to address.
1.14	Monitor enrollments and the type of student interested in both the Certificate in Business and Minor in Business.
1.15	Departments will evaluate their offerings and the MUS common core numbering to identify courses where the BGEN label can be used
1.16	Complete classroom/lab update projects underway.
1.16	Form a task force to explore how to enhance technology in other rooms using the methods mentioned in the strategic plan.

Strategic Goal #	Task
1.17	Work with technology, building, and marketing functions to implement the COB Identity project.
1.17	Secure donor funding to support this project.
2.1	Measure whether students completing BGEN 105S show engagement and persistence that has increased and whether non-business students in BGEN 105S change their major to business.
2.1	Develop phase 2 of BGEN 105S, pending metrics on effectiveness of phase 1.
2.3	Repeat student, faculty, and staff DEI survey. Share results with COB faculty and staff.
2.3	Collect data comparing enrollment, retention, full-time enrollment, and graduation data, parsed by meaningful underrepresented populations (e.g., vets, women, indigenous people). Share results with COB faculty and staff.
2.3	Retitle Director of Student Success to be the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Programs
2.3	Retitle the Director of MBA/MSBA Programs to be Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs
2.3	Review reporting lines for other staff positions.
2.3	Explore whether our current staffing capacity allows for the Director of Operations to take on additional responsibilities for IT and/or budgets.
2.4	Create a Strategy and Innovation Committee, which will report to the dean.
2.5	Majors will develop 3-4 career tracks using existing curriculum
2.5	Career tracks will be communicated to students and faculty using diagrams, handbooks, and other means.
2.5	Majors will evaluate their existing curriculum to identify gaps preventing them from offering relevant career tracks

Strategic Goal #	Task
2.5	Provide resources to offer the right set of courses in a career track
2.5	After these career tracks are identified and the curriculum set, superfluous electives should be eliminated.
2.5	Other majors should explore reducing the number of required courses. Revisit electives to determine if the elective can be more inclusive to COB 300+ level course. Ex: Allow MIS majors to take a finance class as an elective.
2.6	Graduate curriculum committees will evaluate existing certificates for viability and demand
2.6	Graduate curriculum committees will determine if new certificates, or alternative tracks, can be created using existing course offerings.
2.6	Explore whether grad program structure and/or delivery options fit the goals of each graduate program.
2.7	Explore micro-credentials after UM determines the process for those.
2.8	Provide faculty information about cultural leave policy prior to each fall semester.
2.9	Create a taskforce to recommend a small set of communication platforms that COB faculty and staff will use to communicate with students and each other
2.9	Train faculty and staff on the commonly accepted communication platforms.
2.10	Create a taskforce to research technology solutions best suited for technical classes.
3.4	Charge the Research and Thought Leadership Committee with creating standards for what it means to be “research-active,” including expectations for matching teaching load to various percentage-of-effort permutations.

Strategic Goal #	Task
3.4	Obtain approval and funding to support the load shift to adjuncts.
3.5	Research and Thought Leadership Committee obtains faculty input on how research can be supported.
3.5	Funding is obtained to support the research needs of faculty.
4.1	Include the Sustainable Business Certificate in the COB identify Project.
4.1	Include professionals working in stewardship as guest speakers, including those speaking to the new COB-wide club or speaker series.
4.1	Identify a COB faculty member passionate about the topic and the certificate.
4.1	Curriculum committees or departments will compile a menu of how stewardship is included in the COB curriculum.
4.2	Evaluate the certificate to ensure it includes the classes most appropriate for today's focus on ESG (environment, social, and governance) programs in business.
4.3	Identify an administrator, staff person, or faculty member to serve on campus committee (as of October 2022, there remain openings for staff).

Appendix 5: Tasks Completed or Removed (from 2022 updated review)

Strategic Goal #	Task	Completed	Removed
1.1	Launched direct admit scholar program	Completed	
1.2	Start a DECA chapter		Removed
1.5	A&F expanded board and allowed separate domain-specific meeting time	Completed	
1.6	Added "Student Experience" the undergrad Curriculum Committee title	Completed	
1.7	Created PPT I and PPT II core courses as part of core review	Completed	
1.7	Updated ACTG 201 to have a principles focus	Completed	
1.7	Updated ACTG 202 to incorporate personal finance and more Excel	Completed	
1.8	Placed PPT I in the lower core (replaced BMGT 340 in upper core)	Completed	
1.8	Removed "junior in business" requirement from select courses	Completed	
1.9	Deleted CSCI 172 as a required course and placed Excel in ACTG 202, PPT I, and PPT II	Completed	
1.10	Removed the requirement to obtain 60 of the 120 credits in non-business courses	Completed	
1.11	Created a Certificate in Business with a more streamlined course set than the minor	Completed	
1.13	Converted two classrooms to "Zoom" rooms, remodeled GBB 106, lab remodel and GBB 123 remodels underway	Completed	
2.1	Implemented Phase 1 changes to Intro to Business and made it a required course	Completed	
2.5	MAcct program launched as a synchronous hybrid program	Completed	
2.7	Adopted the Zoom platform in various courses	Completed	