



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

CIR REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2020-2025)

SUBMITTED BY: DR. MARY EDITH STACY

PEER REVIEW TEAM VISIT DATES: FEBRUARY 9-11, 2025

College of Business and Technology-School of Business | Northwestern State University

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<https://www.nsula.edu/business/>

Overview

The Northwestern State University (NSU) School of Business (SBUS) provides a high quality, market responsive business and technology education, preparing our diverse student population for successful careers and enriched lives in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, and enhancing our students' academic experiences through our research and scholarly activities. Our goal is to advance the vision of NSU by offering students ethical, innovative, and transformative learning experiences that prepare our graduates for life and career success in Accounting (ACCT), Business Administration (BUAD), and Computer Information Systems (CIS).¹

In this endeavor, the school serves students in small face to face class settings and online. Both environments encourage interaction and promote program access by utilizing a variety of accessibility tools to expand the economic footprint of the SBUS and maintain competitiveness in the education industry. As such, the contributions of the SBUS faculty extend beyond teaching, research, and service. Our faculty produce intellectual contributions that expand the body of knowledge and awareness of current trends in business, technology, and learning/pedagogy and have a positive social impact consistent with the school's mission.

Adherence to the Guiding Principles of the 2020 standards

The SBUS is committed to adhering to the guiding principles articulated in the AACSB 2020 Standards. To demonstrate this adherence, the SBUS is highlighting the following examples of its accomplishments in the ten guiding principles:

- **Ethics and Integrity**: All faculty and staff members complete annual state training as it relates to Ethics, Sexual Harassment, Power Based Violence, Travel Card, Active Shooter, and other mandatory trainings to ensure that individuals are aware of appropriate ethical and safe behavior. As an initial first step, administrators can mediate disputes between stakeholders within the SBUS. Individuals are also aware that they can make complaints in the form of grievances that Human Resources and/or other state agencies can investigate and then take steps to review the complaint and work to provide an appropriate resolution. SBUS faculty also introduce students to concepts related to ethics and integrity in various business courses.
- **Societal Impact**: The SBUS provides experiential opportunities with the goal of our students learning critical thinking skills and applying these to business principles in civic engagement. This pedagogical pillar is critical to our capstone courses for all three majors. Upper-level students work with different local, national, and international companies or non-profit organizations. Students may either directly work or indirectly work with these bodies to research, develop, and implement improvements. Additionally, SBUS faculty contribute to societal impact through intellectual contributions and service.
- **Mission-Driven Focus**: Our mission drives our strategic plan and our actions. The strategic plan focuses on economic improvements as provided in UN's Sustainable Development Goal #8, which ardently promotes sustainable economic growth. A crowning achievement is that the school is actively engaged in assisting in building the framework for the Entrepreneurial

¹ Hospitality Management and Tourism program resides in the COBT; however, we have sought a waiver for this program as they are seeking their own accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA).

Innovation Center which will serve as a business incubator for northwest Louisiana. This 2.1 million dollar initiative will support sustainable businesses and will have an estimated 3 million dollar annual impact to the region.² Another initiative faculty served on a group dedicated to revitalizing economic activity on Texas Street in Natchitoches. The school has partnered with La Gear Up, Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership, Society for Human Resources Management, Cybersecurity Education Management Council, General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT), and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to work diligently to strengthen the financial futures for our many stakeholders.

- Peer Review: The CIR team leaders have had several in-depth conversations with the Peer Review Team's chair during his pre-visit. These conversations were regarding improvement to the CIR document and the supporting documents.
- Continuous Improvement: The SBUS is committed to continuous improvement. Through established assurance of learning and strategic planning processes, the SBUS reviews data annually and makes changes to ensure continue improvement in these areas. We have undergone a complete review of the Assurance of Learning process while still making changes due to feedback gathered in the existing process. Further, the school launched an MS in Computer Information Systems to provide graduate level opportunities for those who seek to become not only managers and owners, but also thought leaders in this field.
- Collegiality: The School of Business strives to be inclusive in many decision-making processes within the college by creating opportunities for faculty of all ranks to serve on committees that help drive the mission of the school forward. In addition, faculty support a long-standing tradition of "Monday, and now inclusive of other days, lunches" which actively promotes a collegial environment.
- Agility: As stakeholders provide feedback, the organization works in real-time to assess and determine if revisions are needed, and implement improvements within the same semester, or the next. The SBUS takes these steps to prepare students to enter the business world better equipped with the knowledge and skills to be successful.
- Global Mindset: All students take BUAD 3270-International Business. In this course, they must demonstrate pertinent knowledge of the global business environment and learn to navigate diverse cultural landscapes. Additionally, faculty members insert global perspectives in several classes to ensure that they have a cultural awareness beyond their own. Faculty also were able to participate in International Week in Alicante, Spain as well as deliver virtual lectures to students and faculty of the Universidad Libre in Columbia. Faculty have traveled to Kenya, France, and Mexico to provide lectures and exchange information about their respective research.
- Diversity and Inclusion: The university's Center for Inclusion and Diversity and the SBUS champion diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging as a strategic priority. In doing so, both units celebrate the diversity and look for meaningful ways to acknowledge differences in students, staff, faculty, and administration from first generation students, Americans with Disabilities stakeholders, international students, and other students with diverse viewpoints. The SBUS has also provided opportunities to discuss challenges and develop solutions to real or perceived barriers to foster a healthy and safe learning environment.

² Please see: <https://www.nsula.edu/nsu-gets-2-1m-for-entrepreneurial-innovation-center-project/>.

- Continued Adherence: The SBUS will implement the newly formulated assurance of learning goals, monitor the strategic plan and AoLs for improvements, and will review industry standards for the next five-year period to continue its alignment with AACSB’s principal mandates to pursue organizational excellence in all its forms.

Mission Focus and Strategic Initiatives

Mission: *The mission of the School of Business is to provide our diverse student population with innovative skills in business and technology to prepare them for successful careers and responsible citizenship roles to have a positive societal impact in the world of business.*

Major Strategic Initiatives: The SBUS developed the major strategic initiatives with the input of internal and external stakeholders to support positive societal and economic outcomes. The SBUS focused on several strategic initiatives: the creation of an entrepreneurship and innovation center, the addition of more degree programs and faculty, the launch of student managed investment funds, and support for global collaborations. These four initiatives align with the strategic goals and objectives for the SBUS. These goals are (1) Learner Success, (2) Economic Development and Societal Impact, and (3) Strategic Management, Innovation and Leadership. These goals reflect the commitment of the college to our students, our region, and to overall operational success.

Summary of Alignment with AACSB Standards

The SBUS strives to closely align any of its initiatives with the AACSB standards. Further, the SBUS inculcates diversity and inclusion, regional economic development, and quality throughout its sphere of influence. In the five years since the last review, the SBUS has diligently sought to intentionally weave the 2020 goals and objectives of AACSB in these above-mentioned critical areas. They are the following:

Strategic Management and Innovation:³ The SBUS meets yearly to review the strategic plan and discuss latest innovations in the business world to determine how to integrate these standards into the classroom in meaningful ways that are impactful for students and external stakeholders. Our continuous improvement process motivates the CISPAC and faculty to continue to remain ever agile.



Learner Success: The mission of the SBUS is providing educational opportunities that prepare students for successful careers and responsible citizenship roles in the business world. To that end, AoL goals were created and deployed to ensure the school fulfills its mission of teaching students. These goals have helped students demonstrate success in business plan competitions, place in the top three in Microsoft Office Specialist certification exams in Louisiana, and qualify for the national level of competition. Students also managed investment funds with their financial management strategies beating the “Street’s” expectations. Not resting on these achievements, the school has additionally undertaken a new mission to revamp the AoL goals to ensure that the students may flourish in the digital global economy.

³ Please see: <https://www.energy.gov/femp/institutional-change-process> for image.

Thought Leadership, Engagement, and Societal Impact: Faculty members understand their integral role in providing thought leadership in their respective business fields. Research and thought leadership have resulted in intellectual contributions which consisted of high quality and impactful peer-reviewed journals and presentations, posters, and guest speakerships. The SBUS faculty created over two hundred intellectual contributions. Additionally, faculty create new courses, concentrations, and introduce new technologies to the classroom as well as to stakeholders.

Engagement and societal impact efforts include the following: COVID business resiliency seminars, the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center, the Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF), Scrum teams, agile development, and interactive classrooms.

Exemplifying: Engagement, Innovation, and Impact: The school has a plethora of examples to exemplify its commitment to engagement, innovation, and societal impact. Here are a few that highlight this dedication.

1. <https://www.nsula.edu/nsu-gets-2-1m-for-entrepreneurial-innovation-center-project/>
2. <https://www.nsula.edu/porter-forum-will-focus-on-business-resilience-during-covid/>
3. <https://www.facebook.com/NSUBusiness>: Bike Project, Inferno Pitch, Work with Industry Partners, RECIPE for Rural STEM-engaged over 1,400 middle school students that hailed from central Louisiana.
4. Academic competitions— CIS student winners, Pelican Cup Winner, FBLA

Strategy for Diverse Climate and Culture

The School of Business pursues continuous improvement efforts to ensure that all students and faculty members are aware of and respectful of the diverse backgrounds that all may hail from and seek that they are more culturally sensitive in their business dealings as we are committed to leaving no one out. The following are examples of these efforts in practice:

Bike Project, Student Business Closet and More: Economic Diversity: The school recognizes that it teaches students of all socioeconomic backgrounds. In 2024, business capstone students began developing a bike program to provide a much-needed solution for fellow students that have limited or no transportation options. Students have also worked with our School's Business Closet. Students and faculty collect gently used business attire from various stakeholders for those that may need or want new apparel to dress for success for final presentations, business interviews, and/or networking.

DEIB: School and Community Involvement: Our faculty, students, and graduates have worked and continue to work to advance society in meaningful and creative ways that uphold the principles of inclusion present in course assignments, in journals, presentations, and community events. For example:

1. Conference proceeding Exploring Risk Management for E-Commerce Startups
2. Inferno Pitch
3. Faculty delivered university wide Microaggressions presentation in Fall 2022
4. Fintech discussions that highlight the importance of underserved (not served) populations discussed in BUAD 4000 (FinTech Law)
5. BAW 3260 (Business Law II) course includes a new assignment to specifically address discrimination in the workplace and the effect of certifications on workforce development and employability.
6. BUAD 4000 (Entrepreneurship) includes discussions of inclusion/exclusion of DEI policies.
7. The final project in BUAD 2200 is about conducting business in other countries (social etiquette, differences in culture, cultural awareness)

8. BLAW2250 (Business Law I) includes case studies on race, marriage, and other social and demographic issues of protected classes.
9. Enhancing DEIB by organizing and hosting the Phi Beta Delta Language and Culture Series
10. Community service projects and experiential contributions in capstone
11. Virtual DEI sessions for Beta Alpha Psi (honor society for Accounting and Finance students). The series is open to all students.

Quality Matter Reviews:

Quality Matters is an independent course review process utilized by the SBUS to improve accessibility of online learning environments. The goal of the review process is to ensure that diverse learners are provided with every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Positive Societal Impact

Curriculum: Exposing students to diverse cultures in international reports in BUAD 2200 and 3270 allows students to be aware of unfamiliar cultures and climates. Guest speakers and experiential learning opportunities connect students to the larger community. Achieving positive societal impact outcomes is a foundation for our decision and implementation process. Examples of societal impact abound from working with businesses and community organizations such as CASA, CSO, Natchitoches Coalition on Homelessness, The Ben D. Johnson Center, Legacy Café, Crime Stoppers of Natchitoches, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Boys' and Girls' Club of Acadian-Natchitoches Club, Natchitoches Regional Medical Center, and many more.

The experiential learning projects promote thought leadership and positive societal impact. Examples of such projects are the NSU Bike Project and the School of Business Student Business Closet. The school personnel recognizes that it teaches students of all socioeconomic backgrounds. In 2024, business capstone students began developing the bike program to provide a much-needed solution for fellow students that have limited or no transportation options.

Thought Leadership: The SBUS has set up the structure to support faculty members in the creation of intellectual contributions making a societal impact. Our faculty, students, and graduates have worked and continue to work to advance society in meaningful and creative ways that uphold the principles of inclusion. Our faculty have contributed to presentations locally and beyond as well as contributed numerous journal articles. Some examples include:

1. Center for Inclusion: NICSS.
2. Faculty Senate-Culture and Climate Committee: Reviewing Hiring Practices and Promotion, Retention, and other key practices.
3. Journals and Presentations:
 - Phi Beta Delta, ABIS, NBES, and other conferences
 - Kenya, Columbia, and Mexico
 - J. Walter Porter Forum, now Walter Porter Experience

Society as a Whole: The work the SBUS is doing inside the classroom and outside the classroom is helping move all of society forward. Faculty are using the curriculum to teach students how to make a societal impact. Faculty and students are engaging with the community whether it is a business, students in PK-12, or other community organizations. Assisting with economic development provides a way for the faculty to enhance the regional economy and contribute to the betterment of society in the region.