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Overview

The Northwestern State University School of Business has provided the following report, along with other requested documents, as part of the continuous improvement review process leading to our accreditation visit in Spring 2025.

Situational Analysis

Established as a teacher's college in 1884, Northwestern State University (NSU) is a public, regional four-year degree granting institution and part of the nine-institution University of Louisiana (UL) System. The main campus is in Natchitoches, Louisiana with other campuses in Leesville/Fort Johnson, Marksville, Shreveport, and Alexandria.

The School of Business (SBUS) is a unit within the College of Business and Technology (COBT), which is one of four colleges at NSU. The SBUS has experienced a leadership change since the last AACSB visit with a new Dean at the helm. The Dean of the COBT is Dr. Mary Edith Stacy, who has served in this position since Fall 2021. She reports to Dr. Greg Handel, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Curtis Penrod has served as the Director of the SBUS since 2021 and reports directly to Dr. Stacy. Ms. Becky Stephens serves as the administrative assistant for the COBT and reports directly to Dr. Stacy. The SBUS employs approximately thirty faculty members including several coordinators who help the administration with program oversight, assessment, planning and accreditation efforts. The coordinators assist in their respective areas with the Director having primary responsibility for evaluating and overseeing the various faculty members.

Four primary areas exist within the School of Business – Accounting (ACCT), Business Administration (BUAD) (which includes multiple disciplines), Computer Information Systems (CIS), and Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT). The HMT program is excluded from AACSB review and has achieved ACPHA accreditation. Dr. Melissa Aldredge serves as the Coordinator of ACCT while Dr. Vianka Miranda serves as Coordinator of Accreditation and Strategic Planning, Dr. Begona Perez-Mira serves as Coordinator of the MS in CIS program, and Dr. Sarah Wright serves as an Enrollment and Advising Specialist. In 2024-2025, Dr. Simon Njeri began serving as the COBT Student Learning Outcome Assessment Coordinator.

Additionally, Northwestern State University has experienced a change in top leadership that has impacted the operational activities of all departments. The University recently hired Dr. James Genovese as the new president, the fifth president in the last ten years. The significant change in leadership has resulted in some disruption in the perception of stability in our organization as a whole. The administration, faculty and staff strive to overcome this perception through community engagement and positive student interactions.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse, many universities nationwide, and most in our region, have experienced a decline in enrollment since 2020, and Northwestern State is no exception. Figure 1 shows the overall enrollment at Northwestern State University (excluding dual enrollment) which has affected enrollment in the School of Business. From Fall 2019, the

Northwestern State enrollment (excluding dual enrollment) has fallen from over 9000 students to under 7000 students.

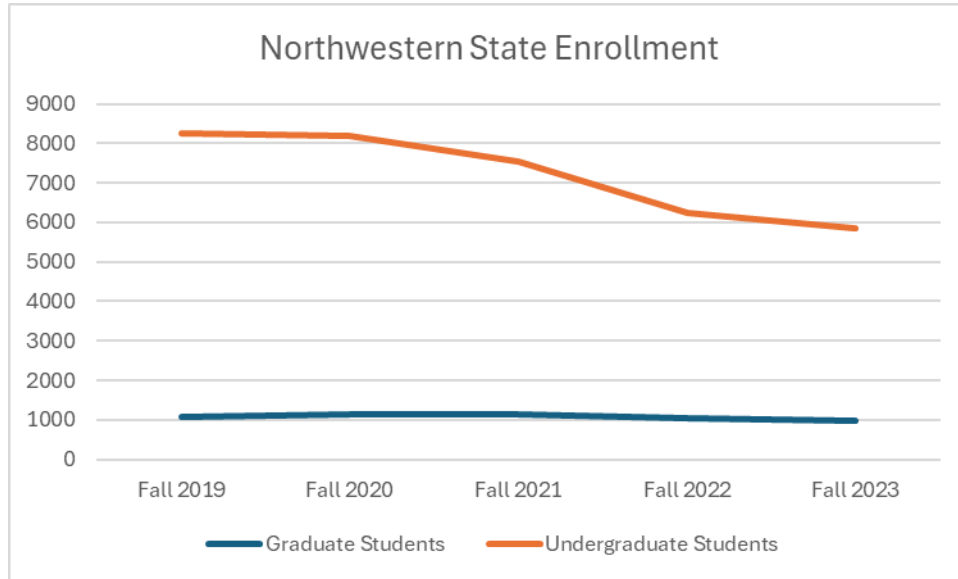


Figure 1. Northwestern State University Enrollment Trends

Source: <https://www.nsula.edu/oir/dashboards/studentenrollment/>

Part of the enrollment decline at the University is related to declining enrollment in Louisiana and in north Louisiana specifically. According to USAFacts¹, the population has declined for several years in a row with almost every parish in the northern part of the state experiencing a decline from 2010 to 2022. This decline includes Natchitoches Parish with a drop of over 7% during that period. This drop has obvious impacts on the local economy as well as enrollment at NSU. Additionally, other institutions in the northern part of the state have been aggressively recruiting students which can have a further impact on NSU's enrollment.

As tuition and fees from enrollment contribute approximately three fourths of the operating budget, this drop in enrollment has contributed to issues with balancing the budget. The remaining one fourth of the budget comes from the state and this funding is at risk over the next few years due to projected budget shortfalls. While the University has been able to maintain a balanced budget and a financial status that is one of the best in the UL System, this decrease has led to positions not being filled, a decline in adjunct and extra services contracts, and a general sense of concern amongst the faculty and staff.

Despite these challenges, the SBUS continues to improve and progress. We have hired well-qualified faculty, improved programs, produced excellent scholarly contributions, and provided many service activities. The SBUS faculty collectively agreed to focus on United Nations sustainable development goal (SDG) #8 which is to "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."² After

¹ See <https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/louisiana/>

² <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>

this agreement, the SBUS faculty have contributed towards this goal through impactful teaching, service, and research.

Addressing of Issues from Prior Peer Review Visit

The 2020 AACSB visit yielded feedback in two areas:

1. Standard 3: Financial Strategies and Allocation of Resources – The SBUS strategic plan should more closely link the allocation of resources to the strategic plans and objectives. The SBUS has adequate financial resources and funding, but the allocation of these funds needs to be directed toward the strategic plan with accompanying metrics.
2. Standard 8: Curricula Management and Assurance of Learning – The SoB needs to continue to refine their AOL system to establish clear mechanisms and paths demonstrating how assessment impacts curricular changes at the program level. This should include an updated rotation schedule and a documented process for sharing information with all faculty leading to the identification of program level changes.

Following the AACSB visit in 2020, the SBUS adopted a [new strategic plan](#) with a focus alignment to the AACSB Standard areas of Strategic Management and Innovation; Learner Success; and Thought Leadership, Engagement and Societal Impact. The strategic plan includes a mapping of each initiative to a corresponding financial resource. As part of this process, we focused on several strategic initiatives that we are pursuing along with plans for the financial requirements to achieve them. The mapping of these initiatives to the goals and objectives of our strategic plan is provided in Table 1. The following table illustrates how each of our revised initiatives has increased relevance and support of our strategic plan and how they specifically address AACSB standards 3 and 8. Additionally, our initiatives support all the UN SDGs, but most importantly our focused SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Table 1. Mapping of Initiatives to Strategic Goals and Objectives.

	STANDARD 3				STANDARD 8			CORRESPONDING SDGs
	Innovation Center	Adding Concentrations/IBCs	Student Managed Investment Fund	Global Collaborations	AOL Committee	Lunch & Learns	Revised Merit Evaluation	
Strategic Plan Goal 1: Promote student success through program development and academic partnerships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1, 2, 4, 8, 10
Obj 1: Increase student retention and completion		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Obj 2: Increase student diversity, engagement, and inclusiveness	x	x		x				
Obj 3: Expose students to employment and internship opportunities	x	x	x					
Obj 4: Improve in person, online, and hybrid course design	x	x	x		x	x		
Strategic Plan Goal 2: Contribute to local and regional development.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11,17
Obj 1: Strengthen economic relationships between business and academic community	x		x	x				
Obj 2: Align curricula with industry demands	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Obj 3: Support innovation and entrepreneurship	x	x	x		x	x		
Strategic Plan Goal 3: Provide efficiency and effectiveness in organizational operations	x	x	x	x				8, 9
Obj 1: Increase the quality of institutional research	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Obj 2: Align strategic goals to organizational budgeting	x	x	x	x				
Obj 3: Qualified and diverse workforce	x	x		x				
Obj 4: Develop skills, abilities, and knowledge of internal workforce	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

We also linked funding sources to each strategic initiative and estimated investment as shown in Table 2-1. While our narrative provides additional information, a bulleted list/summary is as follows:

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center – Funding from Grants, Congressionally Directed Spending, and State Capital Outlay Requests
- Additional Majors and Faculty – Funding from State Appropriations, Tuition and Fees, Grants, and Partnerships with External Entities
- Student Managed Investment Funds – Funding from Endowed Chair Funds, Endowed Professorship Funds, and NSU Foundation Funds
- Global Collaborations – Funding from Endowed Professorship Funds

Table 2. Table 2-1 - Strategic Initiatives and Expected Sources of Funds.

TABLE 2-1 Strategic Initiatives and Source of Funds		
Strategic Initiatives	Total Estimated Investment	Expected Source of Funds
Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center	\$15,000,000	The LSMSA/NSU Innovation Center is budgeted to cost about \$15 million and would be located on University Parkway just west of Sam Sibley Drive. The proposed plan dovetails with Natchitoches Next, the 2023 City of Natchitoches Master Plan, which foresees the LSMSA/NSU Innovation Center as a feature destination of a Campus Edge District, a walkable, active pedestrian corridor designed to create a positive first impression of the city. LSMSA has \$3 million in hand. NSU has been awarded \$2.1 million in congressionally directed spending earmarked for the project. The remaining \$10 million will be obtained through a State of Louisiana/Facility Planning and Control Capital Outlay Request (COR), to be submitted by Nov. 1, 2024
Additional Majors and Faculty	\$50,000 to \$80,000 per faculty member	NSU Operating Fund – state appropriations and tuition/fees; Grant funding; Partnerships with externals entities. The declining in enrollment is hindering this initiative. NSU SOB has an approximately \$580,000 operating budget. However, the majority of the funds are restricted, therefore any new faculty expenses must be supplemented using grants funding or through attrition.
Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF)	\$58,000 initial cost; \$15,000 annual cost	Victory Financial was created in 2022 to provide students the opportunity to develop investment and portfolio management skills by overseeing a fund of real money to be invested based on student research and recommendations. The initial portfolio belonged to Dr. Mark Swanstrom, the Charles Ragus Family Endowed Chair of Business and faculty advisor to the fund. In May 2023, students made their initial recommendation using faculty professorship funds. In December 2023, students were permitted to use an account established with the NSU Foundation with an initial balance of \$58,000. We now have approximately \$69,000 in the account due to the returns earned to date. The university finance committee monitors the account. Victory Financial is a long-equity fund investing in exchange-traded funds (ETF) and individual stocks based on student research. The S&P 500 index is used to evaluate the performance of the fund. The intent is for the fund to be fully invested at all times and will be funded with portfolio gains and/or professorship funds.
Global Collaborations	\$25,000	Endowed professorships enable faculty to attend and host international conferences events such as the National Association of Business Economics and Phi Beta Delta conferences and events to promote global collaborations and partnerships such as the international cultural presentations, conference presentations and proceedings, and scholarship awards to international students.

The initiatives include the following items:

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center: Northwestern State University has entered into a partnership with the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (LSMSA), the state of Louisiana, and the federal government to fund and develop a multipurpose center for use as an entrepreneurship and innovation center. This initiative is a true public/private partnership that will strengthen the university’s societal impact and support our college’s mission of regional economic engagement (See Strategic Initiative #2, Objective #3, p. 5). We are proud to say financial resources have already been allocated to facilitate the development of the [NSU Entrepreneurial Innovation Center](#).

Additional Majors and Faculty: The SBUS is striving to add several new majors to our programs as well as enhance the number of faculty. However, declining enrollment has spurred a change in focus. The School of Business has pursued the enhancement of existing degree concentrations and industry-based certifications. This effort began through engagement with our current student population and area high school guidance counselors. The School of Business has launched and graduated students in the newly established Master of Science in Computer Information Systems. Additionally, since 2020, we have added concentrations in Human Resources Management (under BUAD degree), Pre-Law (under BUAD degree), and Information Systems Management (under CIS degree).

The SBUS pursued and obtained an educational partnership with the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and, in 2023, launched professional development SHRM Certified Professional and SHRM Senior Certified Professional certification classes for business and industry partners in the region. The SBUS has also engaged with the Project Management Institute (PMI) to ensure that our CIS courses are up to date with current industry practices. As a result, SBUS students may earn the PMI CAPM certification upon completion of CIS 4840/MGT 4840, CompTIA Project+ upon completion of CIS 4850, and the SHRM basic training certificate in Human Resource Management upon completion of MGT 4280. The CIS area has continued to add more CompTIA certifications to classes.

When enrollment rises, this increase would then be used to justify state funding for additional faculty and the upgrading of some of our current concentrations to majors. Enhanced support could come from local businesses related to those subjects and accounts could be set up through the NSU Foundation for that specific purpose. For instance, local banks could contribute to a specific fund used to supplement the teaching of banking classes. This step is necessary to show the demand for those classes by students and the community. (See Strategic Initiative #2, Objective #2, p. 4; Strategic Initiative #3, Objective #3, p. 6)

Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF): The SBUS is fortunate to have 23 endowed professorships producing funding for faculty to use (as of August 2024) and an endowed chair with a market value of \$4,344,507 (as of June 2023). The SMIF was launched in Spring 2023 to provide experiential learning opportunities for students as they can make investment allocation decisions with real world consequences. After the first year, students did an outstanding job as they made correct recommendations in 9 out of 14 sectors and 9 out of 12 individual stocks. The SBUS students beat the Dow, Russell, and Global stock index, but trailed the S&P and Nasdaq overall. [Monthly updates](#) are set up for the SMIF. (See Strategic Initiative #2, Objective #2, p. 4)

Global Collaborations: NSU and the SBUS already have several arrangements with schools in Asia, Europe, and South America. Faculty have used professorship funds to travel to these

partner institutions for presentations and conferences. The SBUS will continue to strengthen existing partnerships as well as pursue new partnerships. For example, the SBUS is looking to add an additional partnership with the University of Nairobi once the new president has settled into his office and can review the proposed partnership. (See Strategic Initiative #1, Objective #2, p. 3)

Thus, SBUS has started implementation of several strategic initiatives with the required financial resources. Additionally, the SBUS has been able to identify funding sources for other objectives within the strategic plan. For example, on Strategic Initiative #1, Objective #4, the SBUS obtained permission for faculty to receive extra services contracts if their courses were approved by an internal Quality Matters committee as well as an additional contract if their courses were approved by the national Quality Matters organization.

As noted by the 2020 team, much of the curricular development had been done through informal changes to individual classes and was not formally documented in the earlier report unless it was a change that required approval by the university's Curriculum Review Committee (CRC). To enhance communication, information sharing, and decision making, the SBUS created a new umbrella committee composed of the chairs of each individual AOL committee and headed by the college's AOL assessment chair. This effort supports all three strategic initiatives found within the strategic plan. This committee is responsible for gathering the information from the individual AOL areas, discussing it, and then discussing changes across the curriculum. For example, the WSJ offers a critical thinking exercise option to professors focused on different areas (finance, management, marketing, etc.). As critical thinking is one of the AOLs, this exercise was shared with other instructors for adoption of the material in their classes.

Each year, the AOL team leaders author reports that include SBUS performance measures, past changes to the curriculum, effects of changes, and proposed changes based on those performance measures. The AOL measurements are set up on a rotation schedule. Effective 2022-2023, the SBUS returned to the use of in-person meetings and Lunch & Learns to further share information about the AOL assessments and discuss curricular changes that improve learning success, societal impact goals, and skills that are relevant to external stakeholders (see Strategic Initiative #3, Objective #4, p.6).

Additionally, the SBUS revised the faculty merit evaluation form to reward faculty for implementing changes based on AOL results. The appendix includes an example of the merit form used in Spring 2024. A specific section of the evaluation sheet relates to changes made in classes that aid in improving the various AOL areas. This sheet also allows for a more comprehensive gathering of changes across the curriculum. The Director reviews faculty each spring allowing for an annual collection of these changes (see Strategic Initiative #3, Objective #4, p. 6).

While discussed in more detail later in this document, the faculty participated in many discussions regarding curriculum in the last few years. Faculty approved key changes to the curriculum, including changes related to AOLs. For example, effective 2024-2025, students in all three of the degree programs must now take COMM1010 – Oral Communication or COMM2500 – Interpersonal Communication. The SBUS faculty expect the inclusion of this additional communication course will enhance the AOL outcomes, particularly in the communication area.

Substantive Change Requests

Outside of exclusion requests, the SBUS has made no requests to AACSB.

Consultative Guidance

The SBUS is reviewing the possibility of adding several degrees. The BS in Business Administration currently has eight concentrations which are equivalent, or almost equivalent, to full degree programs in the various areas. Specifically, the SBUS is considering proposing stand-alone BS in Finance, BS in Management, and BS in Marketing degrees. Additionally, the SBUS is exploring the possibility of an MBA program. The addition of these degrees would make the SBUS more competitive against some of our competitor schools.

We would appreciate any guidance from the peer review team on the feasibility of these degrees as well as guidance on any challenges regarding implementation of these degrees.

Additionally, during a pre-visit, the topic of the number of administrative positions arose. Thus, the Dean of the COBT has begun discussions with the administration about the leadership structure within the SBUS. By the time of the visit, the Dean of the COBT may have already made some changes. Even if Dean of the COBT has made changes, we would still consider further guidance.

We would also appreciate any guidance from the peer review team on the leadership structure of the SBUS.

New Degree Programs

Since the last visit, the SBUS has launched one new degree program – the MS in Computer Information Systems. The first students entered this degree program in Fall 2020.

Business Accreditation Standards – Past and Future Look

This next section of the report provides key information regarding how the SBUS has met the standards within the three main areas of strategic management and innovation, learner success, and thought leadership, engagement, and social impact.

Strategic Management and Innovation

The SBUS believes strategic management is vital to the success of the unit and ensures that the administrators, faculty, and staff of the SBUS are focused on the right goals and objectives and are putting the resources and support behind those goals and objectives. The SBUS faculty and staff are committed to being innovative in their teaching, research, and service to have an impact on the region that we serve.

Strategic Management Planning Process

The SBUS [strategic plan](#) is found at the proper location on the AACSB website as well as being available online. The strategic plan includes the mission, societal impact statement, vision, core values, and strategic goals and objectives for the SBUS. All components of the strategic plan align to support the mission of the SBUS which is as follows:

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. (Approved 02/2021.)

As discussed previously, 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. The focus of these four initiatives aligns with the listed strategic goals and objectives found in the strategic plan:

Strategic Goal 1: Learner Success. Promote student success through program development and academic partnerships.

Objective 1: Increase student retention and completion rates.

Objective 2: Increase student diversity, engagement, and inclusiveness.

Objective 3: Expose students to employment and internship opportunities.

Objective 4: Improve online and hybrid course design.

Strategic Goal 2: Economic Development and Societal Impact. Contribute to local and regional economic development initiatives to respond to the needs of business and industry in North and Central Louisiana.

Objective 1: Strengthen economic development programs.

Objective 2: Align curricula with tomorrow's workforce demands through expanded and enhanced public and private partnerships.

Objective 3: Support innovation and entrepreneurship.

Strategic Goal 3: Strategic Management, Innovation and Leadership. Provide efficiency and effectiveness in organizational operations through assessment, planning, and continuous performance improvement.

Objective 1: Increase the use and validity of institutional research data feedback for outcomes analysis.

Objective 2: Align strategic goals to organizational budgeting for effective stewardship of physical, virtual, and financial resources.

Objective 3: Attract and retain qualified and diverse faculty to promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.

Objective 4: Increase the skills, abilities, and knowledge of the internal workforce to better serve internal and external stakeholders and promote learner success.

This strategic plan serves as the operational plan for the COBT-SBUS. The SBUS has sought to structure its resources to support the strategic plan as well as reinforce the plan through its decision-making. As one example, the SBUS faculty voted to update the merit sheet (example found in appendix) to better reinforce several key components from the strategic plan. Each year, the Director evaluates faculty to determine Highest Merit, High Merit, Merit, and No Merit. The evaluation is primarily based on a point-based worksheet. In a specific example of a category related to the strategic plan, the Continuous Improvement, Strategic Planning, and Accreditation Committee (CISPAC) outlines three CISPAC objectives for faculty to pursue. Faculty get points for each CISPAC objective they pursue. For the last several years, the three CISPAC objectives for faculty have been as follows:

- Implement Quality Matters into course shells
- Conduct research with clear societal impact (enhancing the economic wellbeing of our stakeholders)
- Enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

These can be updated on a yearly basis. For example, in 2024-2025, these objectives changed slightly. These CISPAC objectives clearly align with key objectives and tasks in the strategic plan and are one component of the decision-making process in regard to faculty merit evaluation. The strategic plan also factors into the decision of which faculty members get which professorships. One of the questions that faculty must answer when applying for a professorship is “If awarded, how do you plan to use the professorship funds to support the SoB Strategic Plan?” The professorship committee then takes those answers into consideration when deciding the professorship awards.

To help ensure the strategic plan is relevant and guiding the SBUS administrators, faculty, and staff in the correct directions, a dedicated faculty member monitors and updates the strategic plan on an annual basis. Dr. Vianka Miranda receives a salary supplement each year to serve as the Coordinator of Accreditation and Strategic Planning. The duties of this coordinator position include monitoring the progress towards meeting these initiatives, reporting results back to the proper personnel, communicating with stakeholders, and updating the plan as necessary.

Each academic year (usually in the fall semester), Dr. Miranda holds a required meeting with SBUS faculty to discuss the latest results of the strategic plan. During that meeting, the faculty discuss the results, talk about what can be done better, and provide ideas regarding possible changes in the strategic plan. Then, Dr. Miranda updates the strategic plan (usually in the spring semester) and starts gathering results for the next academic year. Changes made to the strategic plan can be found in the appendix under the file labeled “Changes to Strategic Plan”. Thus, the

strategic plan is a dynamic document that Dr. Miranda updates on an annual basis based on feedback from SBUS faculty.

However, faculty are not the only stakeholders who affect the strategic plan. The strategic plan was developed with input from internal and external stakeholders, faculty, and staff. The SBUS engages with external stakeholders in a variety of forums such as the advisory board meetings, Walter Porter Forum, Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce, guest speakers, etc., that align with the College's core activities and support the mission strategies and expected outcomes to promote positive societal impact. Other examples include a business development series with the Natchitoches Chamber Summer 2020 in response to COVID19 as well as PeerSpectives training for faculty so that they may better facilitate small business roundtable sessions in conjunction with the Louisiana Economic Development. The input from these external engagements is both part of the strategic plan results and an impetus for possible changes in the strategic plan.

Of course, the SBUS also aligns the strategic plan with the AACSB standards as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Alignment of NSU Strategic Plan and AACSB Standards.

AACSB STANDARDS	NSU SOB STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Standards 1-3: Strategic Management and Innovation	Strategic Initiative 3: Provide efficiency and effectiveness in organizational operations.
Standard 1 robust strategic plan, a risk analysis is required, but may be either qualitative or quantitative.	Objective 1: Increase the quality of institutional research
Standard 2 provide adequate physical and virtual resources to meet their missions and strategic goals.	Objective 2: Align strategic goals to organizational budgeting
Standard 3 establishes that faculty qualifications and sufficiency should be shown by discipline; minimum 40-percent Scholarly Academic faculty ratio in disciplines that have degrees, majors, or concentrations; , in areas where the 40-percent guideline is not met, a school may make a case for high-quality outcomes in that discipline.	Objective 3: Qualified and diverse workforce
	Objective 4: Develop skills, abilities, and knowledge of internal workforce
Standards 4-7: Learner Success	Strategic Initiative 1:: Promote student success through program development and academic partnerships.
Standard 4 curriculum is current, relevant, forwardlooking, globally-oriented, and aligned with program competency goals; cultivate skill and competence with current and emerging technology.	Objective 1: Increase student retention and completion
Standard 5 show both direct and indirect measures of assurance of learning.	Objective 2: Increase student diversity, engagement, and inclusiveness
Standard 6 admission policies in place that are transparent to learners.	Objective 3: Expose students to employment and internship opportunities
Standard 7 requires a school to establish its own policies for evaluating teaching effectiveness and to have a plan for remediation where needed to support highquality teaching.	Objective 4: Improve in person, online, and hybrid course design
Standards 8-9: Thought Leadership, Engagement and Societal Impact	Strategic initiative 2: Contribute to local and regional development.
Standard 8 show the types of intellectual contributions produced by their faculty; requires that the intellectual contributions are of high quality, impactful, and consistent	Objective 1: Strengthen economic relationships between business and academic community
	Objective 2: Align curricula with industry demands
Standard 9 demonstrate a positive impact on society, consistent with their stated goals in Standard 1.	Objective 3: Support innovation and entrepreneurship

In conjunction with the strategic plan, the SBUS has created the risk analysis and remediation plan for major risks that is located in the AACSB application. The plan has two components – one with brief information and the other with more detailed information. Each component is uploaded in the appendix. As shown in the documents, a myriad of potential risks exist that can affect the strategic plan. However, NSU and the SBUS have developed mitigations for these potential risks.

These various initiatives within the strategic plan allow the SBUS faculty and staff to make a significant societal impact in the areas of teaching, research, and service. For example, the listed expected outcome for Strategic Initiative 2 is “Create positive societal impact and promote economic growth in the service region through partnerships, research, service, development,

experiential learning activities, and community engagement.” CISPAC, and the overall SBUS faculty, continuously monitor and revise the strategic plan to ensure that internal and external activities and initiatives contribute to the SBUS meeting its economic and societal impact aspirations.

The portfolio of intellectual contributions includes basic, applied, and pedagogical research that had a positive societal impact, consistent with the school’s mission. The coursework and curriculum integrate innovative business and technological education with economic development and societal betterment that enables students to become responsible employees and employers. For example, the CIS faculty offer annual student coding events. The MGT 4300 and 4320 capstone courses include experiential learning projects which require students to actively engage with and aid local small businesses (including non-profits) with a pressing business need. Societal impact is a continuous process as outlined in the Strategic Plan and the COBT CISPAC members continuously evaluate its societal impact to ensure that the impacts are consistent with the College’s mission, including specific areas of positive societal impact and significant examples of success at the annual strategic planning review meetings.

A few examples of endeavors with societal impact by faculty and staff to support the strategic plan include, but are not limited to:

- Experiential simulation projects (ESP)
- Innovative community service project and activities
- Engaging assignments within the course curricula
- Annual Inferno Pitch competitions (NSU students were the 2022-2023 winners of the Pelican Cup)
- COBT collaboration with the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce to present several webinars regarding sustainability in times of crises.
- Partnership with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to be the regional partner for SHRM certifications.
- School of Business Student Advisory and Outreach Board
- Innovation in classrooms through technological and pedagogical changes (usage of Webex and Teams to connect with students not in the classroom, use of hybrid classes, Promethean Boards, CIS labs, grant submission for interactive learning room)
- Incorporation of real-world business scenarios into assignments/projects
- Guest speakers
- Job fairs
- Joint STEM training by the CIS faculty and the College of Education faculty to middle-school math and science teachers in high-need schools within the Central Louisiana School Districts (CLIP initiative)
- Participation in the LA GearUp initiative
- Embedded industry-based credentials
- Publication of relevant scholarly work
- Relevant presentations and industry engagement
- Pursuit of grant funding to support initiatives

The SBUS is also committed to advancing diversity and inclusion consistent with our mission statement “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.” The SBUS program structure provides a multi-faceted and nuanced understanding of business and a strong commitment to innovation, experiential learning, and societal impact in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. The coursework and curriculum integrate innovative business and technological education with economic development and societal betterment projects that empower students to become responsible employees and employers. Faculty and staff engage with external stakeholders in a variety of forums that align with the College’s core activities and support the mission, strategies, and expected outcomes to promote positive societal impact.

As a guiding principle of the university, “Diversity helps define who we are. We welcome and respect everyone traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.”, diversity is strongly present in all the institution’s efforts. NSU strives to foster an environment in which all individuals are respected and valued for their different backgrounds, interests, experiences, and cultural and intellectual perspectives. To achieve this goal, specific recruitment efforts at the university area are centered in the recruitment office. Recruiters complete visits across the state where they present all programs at the university to high schools and counselors. In the last few years, the former president initiated a strong focus on recruiting international students to attend our institution. Most of these international students are from countries in Central and South America with strong numbers from Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico. In lesser numbers, our institution also hosts students from European countries (Spain, France, Italy). NSU also created the Center for Inclusion and Diversity. This center sponsors programs throughout the year that focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the institution.

At the SBUS, our strategies to recruit and retain diverse learners follow our institution’s strategy very closely. Our faculty attends all recruiting events with information and materials that reflect our diverse student population. The SBUS currently has a faculty that includes international perspectives as well as local, regional, and national perspectives. Efforts have been made to include a more diverse faculty that more closely represents our student body. We offered professional development opportunities on various topics related to diversity for the faculty. Additionally, as previously noted, one of the key CISPAC objectives for faculty was to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Financial Situation and Relationship to Strategic Initiatives

The SBUS is committed to continuous improvement and has initiated several strategic initiatives which are funded by operations, endowments, or outside support as outlined in Table 2-1. Table 2-1 outlines the school's four major initiatives, the total investment expected, and the sources of funding. The identified initiatives are clearly linked to the school's mission, expected outcomes, and supporting strategies and reflect substantive actions that support mission success, impact, and innovation. The SBUS has planned these major initiatives and identified current and potential funding sources that fit with the school's mission, financial resources, and strategies.

These action items will enhance mission fulfillment and may necessitate revisions to our mission.

Table 4. Table 2-1 - Strategic Initiatives and Expected Sources of Funds.

TABLE 2-1 Strategic Initiatives and Source of Funds		
Strategic Initiatives	Total Estimated Investment	Expected Source of Funds
Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center	\$15,000,000	The LSMSA/NSU Innovation Center is budgeted to cost about \$15 million and would be located on University Parkway just west of Sam Sibley Drive. The proposed plan dovetails with Natchitoches Next, the 2023 City of Natchitoches Master Plan, which foresees the LSMSA/NSU Innovation Center as a feature destination of a Campus Edge District, a walkable, active pedestrian corridor designed to create a positive first impression of the city. LSMSA has \$3 million in hand. NSU has been awarded \$2.1 million in congressionally directed spending earmarked for the project. The remaining \$10 million will be obtained through a State of Louisiana/Facility Planning and Control Capital Outlay Request (COR), to be submitted by Nov. 1, 2024
Additional Majors and Faculty	\$50,000 to \$80,000 per faculty member	NSU Operating Fund – state appropriations and tuition/fees; Grant funding; Partnerships with externals entities. The declining in enrollment is hindering this initiative. NSU SOB has an approximately \$580,000 operating budget. However, the majority of the funds are restricted, therefore any new faculty expenses must be supplemented using grants funding or through attrition.
Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF)	\$58,000 initial cost; \$15,000 annual cost	Victory Financial was created in 2022 to provide students the opportunity to develop investment and portfolio management skills by overseeing a fund of real money to be invested based on student research and recommendations. The initial portfolio belonged to Dr. Mark Swanstrom, the Charles Ragus Family Endowed Chair of Business and faculty advisor to the fund. In May 2023, students made their initial recommendation using faculty professorship funds. In December 2023, students were permitted to use an account established with the NSU Foundation with an initial balance of \$58,000. We now have approximately \$69,000 in the account due to the returns earned to date. The university finance committee monitors the account. Victory Financial is a long-equity fund investing in exchange-traded funds (ETF) and individual stocks based on student research. The S&P 500 index is used to evaluate the performance of the fund. The intent is for the fund to be fully invested at all times and will be funded with portfolio gains and/or professorship funds.
Global Collaborations	\$25,000	Endowed professorships enable faculty to attend and host international conferences events such as the National Association of Business Economics and Phi Beta Delta conferences and events to promote global collaborations and partnerships such as the international cultural presentations, conference presentations and proceedings, and scholarship awards to international students.

Our most exciting strategic initiative has been years in the making and is finally becoming a reality. NSU, in conjunction with the Louisiana School for Math Science and the Arts (LSMSA) and the state of Louisiana, has received initial funding to establish the NSU Entrepreneurial Innovation Center (NEIC).³ The SBUS has long hoped to create an entrepreneurship center and business incubator on campus to provide shared resources for student business ideas. The innovation center would provide training and counseling for start-ups and small businesses, a maker’s space for designing and creating using CAD/CAM and 3-d printing technology, and an

³[NSU Entrepreneurial Innovation Center](#)

area for office space and events. The total cost of the project will likely be over fifteen million dollars.

The innovation center aligns nicely with the efforts of the SBUS to promote entrepreneurship and our strategic plan objective of economic development and societal impact. We created our entrepreneurship concentration in 2021 after working for many years with the Biomedical Research Foundation (BRF). In 2014, BRF launched the Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program (EAP). In 2018, BRF and EAP began partnering with universities in the region including NSU. The BRF offered universities an opportunity to invest in the second New Louisiana Angel Fund (NLAF2). The \$12,500 investment came from the SBUS Director's fund with a match proved by BRF. The purpose of this fund was to encourage entrepreneurial activity among university students and led to the first annual Inferno Pitch in Fall 2018 and the development of an Entrepreneurship concentration in 2021. NSU has been very successful in their efforts including winning the Pelican Cup – a state-wide student entrepreneurship contest. The 2023 team from NSU won \$25,000 for their mobility assistance device company named Rise and Rotate.⁴

Another initiative is to expand our recently created Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF). The SBUS launched the SMIF in Spring 2023 to give an experiential learning opportunity where students make investment allocation decisions with real world consequences. The SMIF initially existed as a proof of concept managing \$130,000 in private funds but has since moved on to making decisions for \$50,000 in non-dedicated funds that are part of the university endowment and monitored by the university finance committee. Fundraising for a permanent dedicated fund within the endowment was successful and, after a successful first year, the SBUS students managing the SMIF demonstrated exceptional skill in managing investments, making astute recommendations across various sectors. An estimate of ongoing costs is \$15,000 annually and the SBUS will fund with portfolio gains and/or professorship funds.

The SBUS is striving to add several new majors to our programs as well as enhance the number of faculty. However, declining enrollment has spurred a change in focus as funding from operational sources has become more difficult and some faculty lines have been frozen. The SBUS has pursued the enhancement of existing degree concentrations and industry-based certifications. The SBUS has launched and graduated students in the newly established Master of Science in Computer Information Systems. Additionally, since 2020, we have added concentrations in Human Resources Management (under BUAD degree), Pre-Law (under BUAD degree), and Information Systems Management (under CIS degree). As we move forward, we are also having conversations with other units about potential collaborations.

When enrollment rises, this increase would then be used to justify state funding for additional faculty and the upgrading of some of our current concentrations to majors. Possible stand-alone degree programs could include Finance, Management, and Marketing. As the faculty makeup changes due to retirements and resignations, the SBUS administration will be cognizant when

⁴[NSU students win Pelican Cup for Rise and Rotate mobility assistance device | Bossier Press-Tribune](#)

hiring new faculty as to whether they would be able to support the creation of a new degree program.

A final strategic initiative is global collaboration. The SBUS collaborates with the International Student Resource Center and NSU to offer international studies programs that include study abroad engagements. NSU currently has 24 bilateral agreements with universities in Europe, Asia, and South America. These partnerships are socially beneficial to students. For example, the partnership with the University of Alicante in Spain includes the opportunity for students to travel to Spain during International Week at their School of Economics and Business. The students assist professors in teaching, lecturing, or presenting business-related topics while sharing educational and cultural experiences. In 2021, seven NSU professors developed ten lectures provided to students at Universidad Libre in Colombia. Faculty fund their participation through their professorships while student participation is self-funded.

The SBUS is pursuing these initiatives, with modifications, despite challenges in funding. Excluding dual enrollment students, the total NSU enrollment from Fall 2019 to Fall 2023 decreased from over nine thousand students to slightly under seven thousand students. The College of Business and Technology decreased from over twelve hundred students to below nine hundred students over that same period. This enrollment decline led to an initial budget deficit of over fourteen million dollars in the 23-24 fiscal year. Fortunately, the University and the SBUS had been preparing for this budget deficit.

In the 22-23 fiscal year, the Business Affairs office met and challenged all units to save money to help close the budget deficit without leading to full-time personnel cuts in their unit. The COBT administration worked diligently to do so by examining class offerings, expanding the maximum class enrollment, and reducing the number of extra services and adjunct contracts. The COBT administration froze approximately six faculty and staff positions while reducing the extra services/adjunct budget by over 75%. Through the COBT efforts, and efforts throughout campus, the University balanced the budget by the end of the 23-24 fiscal year.

Unfortunately, enrollment has continued to decline although NSU's incoming president has made increasing that enrollment a top priority. Continued enrollment declines lead to further budget deficits. Some methods of addressing that budget deficit are outside the purview of the SBUS. However, the SBUS is committed to helping address the budget deficit while still pursuing our mission and strategic initiatives. For three of the four strategic initiatives (Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center, SMIF, and Global Collaborations), the funds to support these areas primarily come from non-operating funds such as the NSU Foundation, state/national appropriations, and endowed professorships.

Additionally, the SBUS administration is mindful of the strategic plan as we are filling positions and helping to address the budget deficit. As an example, one faculty member in ACCT retired after the Spring 2024 semester. The SBUS administration advertised for a variety of positions and has offered a candidate that may allow us to have the faculty resources we need to offer a BS in Finance. Making adjustments, such as that one, allows us to still pursue the initiative of offering additional majors in the future.

Additionally, many of the objectives in the strategic plan either do not require monetary resources or the SBUS can fund them through resources such as endowed professorships or NSU Foundation funds. Table 5 provides a summary of the various financial resources (lab fees and NSU Foundation Funds) that can support our initiatives.

Table 5. Summary of NSU SBUS Financial Resources.

Accounting Fund	Ending Balance
SHRM Professional Development Classes	\$ 1,149.62
School of Business Director’s Fund	\$ 19,841.30
CIS Enhancement Fund	\$ 10,487.65
Accounting Fund	\$ 57,869.82
Business Lab Fees	\$ 278,714.77
CIS Lab Fees	\$ 215,020.52
	\$ 583,083.68

Using our merit sheet, we have incentivized faculty to expend their efforts and resources in areas related to the strategic plan. In 2024-2025, SBUS faculty have \$249,856 in available funds from the endowed professorships and endowed chair. Additional funds are available from excess funding in the endowed professorship upon approval by the provost and Business Affairs.

Also, as necessary, the SBUS will adjust its strategic initiatives. As one example, global collaboration was a key area of interest for our previous president. With an incoming president, he may identify other key areas that the SBUS needs to support. The SBUS takes input from all its stakeholders, prioritizes what can be done, and tries to identify the resources to make those priorities happen.

The SBUS administrators and faculty will also continue to pursue external funding. Additional professorships and chairs would provide even more funding to help support the faculty in their work. Alumni and industry donations through the NSU Foundation can support many of the efforts in the SBUS. Partnerships, such as the one between the CIS area, GDIT, and Louisiana Economic Development, allow for the hiring of additional faculty and staff. Thus, while the University and SBUS have significant financial constraints in at least the short term, we are committed to mitigating the effects of those constraints while still pursuing our strategic goals.

Faculty Qualifications, Sufficiency, and Deployment

As the Faculty and Qualifications and Sufficiency Criteria document (found in appendix) shows, the SBUS has defined key components of faculty sufficiency, faculty qualifications, and faculty deployment.

To hire a faculty member or administrator on a permanent basis, the Director of the SBUS submits a request to advertise for a position. The Director then routes this request through the Dean of the COBT, the Provost, and several other officials. Upon approval, the Director (or his

designee as chair of a search committee) gathers applications and forms a search committee of SBUS faculty members. The search committee then reviews applications, schedules interviews, sets up teaching sessions, and sets up meetings between the candidate(s) and the dean and provost. Upon choosing a candidate, the Director of the SBUS gives a conditional offer to the candidate outlining basic expectations and then routes the request to hire through the Dean of the COBT, the Provost, and several other officials.

Upon approval of the hire, the Director of the SBUS meets with the new faculty members, outlines expectations, and reviews key parts of the job. The Director of the SBUS then evaluates faculty on a yearly basis. During the spring semester, the Director of the SBUS evaluates all faculty members as part of an annual evaluation process which involves a review of goals and objectives from the previous year, the setting of goals and objectives for the current year, a review of student evaluation of instruction, a review of the faculty-approved merit sheet, and a review of their current AACSB qualification status. The Director gives feedback on various items and works with faculty members on expectations for the year. Based on that meeting, the Director of the SBUS then makes merit recommendations to the Dean of the COBT.

Additionally, non-tenured faculty members participate in the Promotion, Retention, and Tenure (PRT) process each year where they submit various materials to the committee for year. The committee then makes recommendations to the Director who then makes further recommendations to the Dean who then makes recommendations to the Provost.

Additionally, the Director conducts a face-to-face or online classroom visit each year. Utilizing a faculty-approved rating sheet, the Director reviews the faculty member teaching the course and gives feedback to the faculty member.

The primary challenge in hiring new faculty members or administrators is getting approval for the initial request to advertise. Given the current financial constraints of the university, the university administration analyzes requests to replace individuals or to create new positions very closely. The unit has several frozen positions and is aware that further budget deficits will continue to constrain the hiring process.

The other challenge relates to the desirability of jobs. While the SBUS enjoys higher salaries compared to many individuals in the local region, we do not compare as favorably to AACSB-accredited institutions. Generally, many of the pay scales rank in the bottom third of pay when compared to other AACSB-accredited institutions. This lower pay scale makes it more challenging to find qualified individuals. Many of the hires are individuals who have some ties to the university, either geographically or as alumni of the university.

However, despite these constraints, we have been able to maintain a faculty group who are excelling at meeting the teaching, research, and service responsibilities of the positions. This excellence is reflected by the fact that the SBUS is meeting all faculty sufficiency and qualification ratios in 2023-2024 at the unit level as well as each discipline level. Table 3-1, found in the addendum upload area of the AACSB application, shows these ratios.

The Faculty Qualifications and Sufficiency Criteria document outlines the criteria for determining participating and supporting faculty. Generally, participating faculty members are tenured or tenure-track faculty members, instructors, and lecturers as well as visiting instructors and professors, part-time instructors, and endowed chairs. These faculty members are involved in governance, curriculum development and service activities and normally have an office on campus, have office hours, teach in both fall and spring semesters, participate in various meetings, serve on committees, and provide other services. Faculty members serve on a variety of committees at the unit level as well as potentially at the university level. Effective Fall 2024, service on the SBUS committee is guided by the bylaws included in the appendix.

Supporting faculty members are normally adjunct instructors as they are not involved in the aforementioned activities. As the SBUS made a large reduction in our adjunct budget in the last two years, the Faculty Sufficiency ratios for 2023-2024 were very high with over 90% in all three disciplines and overall. Thus, the SBUS expects to have sufficient participating faculty for the foreseeable future.

When looking at the deployment of faculty members, the SBUS outlined the following faculty deployment plan for its baccalaureate degree programs:

- Scholarly Academic: 50% - 65%
- Practice Academic: 10% - 20%
- Scholarly Practitioner: 5% - 20%
- Instructional Practitioner: 5% - 20%
- Additional: < 10%

Table 3-2 shows the SBUS is very close to meeting that plan for the baccalaureate degree programs as the SBUS had the following percentages for the 2023-2024 academic year:

Table 6. Table 3-2 - Faculty percent of teaching by program and degree level.

Table 3-2						
Faculty percent of teaching by program and degree level						
Metric Used (should be the same as what was used in Table 3-1 to calculate sufficiency):	Student Credit Hours					
	Scholarly Academic (SA) %	Practice Academic (PA) %	Scholarly Practitioner (SP) %	Instructional Practitioner	Additional (A) %	Total %
Degree Program*						
Bachelor's Programs	63.7%	5.1%	14.3%	16.2%	0.7%	100.0%
Master's 1 - CIS	100.0%					100.0%
Master's 2						0.0%
Master's 3						0.0%
Doctorate 1						0.0%
Doctorate 2						0.0%
Doctorate 3						0.0%

The only category not within the prescribed ranges was Practice Academic. Given the incentives put into place to support scholarly research, university requirements for research in the

promotion and tenure process, and the fact that Scholarly Academic is near the top of its range, the SBUS administration is pleased with the overall results. While not labeled as Practice Academic, many of the faculty are participating in professional engagement activities while also engaging in their primary scholarly engagement activities.

The SBUS calculates these percentages on a yearly basis, and the SBUS administration can reference them in determining the category needed for new or replacement hires. Additionally, the Director of the SBUS reviews the categories for existing faculty members each year during the annual merit review process. If a faculty member has moved to Additional faculty or will be moving to Additional faculty soon due to the moving five-year timeline, the Director and the faculty member identify goals for the faculty member to complete to maintain their existing qualification or return to a previous qualification.

The requirements to maintain their faculty engagement help ensure faculty are maintaining currency and relevancy in their area of teaching. The Faculty Qualifications and Sufficiency Criteria document contains a listing of the allowed engagement activities. For example, to maintain their Practice Academic status, faculty members must engage in at least four engagement activities which include items such as consulting, acquisition of certifications or licensures related to their field, or part-time employment in a business. In another example, faculty members wanting to maintain their Scholarly Academic status must produce a combination of scholarly work that can include journal articles, grants, presentations, and other academic engagement activities. Each year, the Director of the School of Business reviews each faculty member's status with the faculty member and discusses goals and objectives that can include activities designed to maintain currency and relevancy.

Learner Success

Learner success is a primary goal of NSU and the COBT. This goal is ingrained in the culture within the college and the university. Assurance of Learning (AoL) and assessment activities have been adapted and integrated into the SBUS in support of its mission of “providing 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.” To ensure program alignment with industry standards and to ensure our learners are competitive in the marketplace, the SBUS solicits input from alumni and advisory councils, current market trends are reviewed by faculty, guest lectures by specialists are provided to students and faculty, training in latest technologies is conducted, and innovative ideas are often presented to the students.

Current, Relevant, Forward-Looking, and Globally Oriented Curriculum

Curriculum at the SBUS is a living, changing organism that evolves as the needs of the students, the community and the global market develop. For example, since the last visit, the SBUS has modified the curriculum to fit the changing needs of industry. Recognizing the increasing need for industry level certifications, the SBUS added several certifications to the CIS curriculum: Amazon Web Services, Mendix, Agile Certification, CompTIA Cloud+, and CompTIA Project+ among others. In the BUAD curriculum, the SBUS added a Human Resources certification and

Project Management certifications to the already existing Real Estate and Insurance Certifications. These certifications assure the relevance of our curriculum as well as providing extra needed credentials to our students.

The SBUS has a defined process to make curriculum changes. Due to a smaller faculty, each area (ACCT, BUAD, and CIS) meets as a group to discuss curriculum changes within their majors that can then be taken to the larger SBUS faculty. After the SBUS faculty votes on changes, the changes are taken to the University Curriculum Review Committee for review. All changes are faculty driven based upon business and industry feedback, workforce development needs, student needs, and AoL goals and data analysis. Figure 2 depicts the university curricula procedures which the school follows.

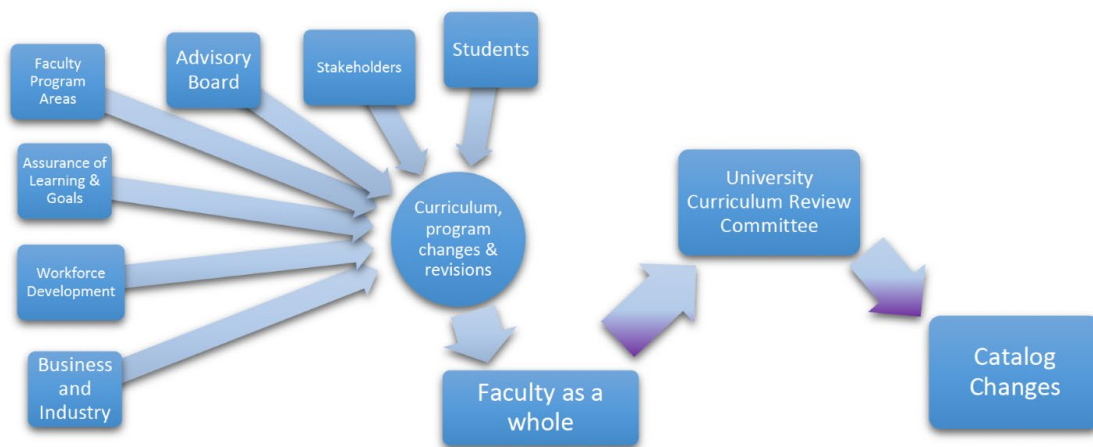


Figure 2. University Curricula Procedures

The base curriculum for all three disciplines includes ACCT2000 (Financial Accounting), ACCT2010 (Managerial Accounting), BUAD2120 (Basic Business Statistics), BUAD2200 (Business Reports and Communication), BUAD3270 (International Business), FIN 3090 (Business Finance), MGT 3220 (Organization and Management), MKTG3230 (Principles of Marketing, and the various courses that will also count towards the general education requirements. All three disciplines include a required business law component: BLAW2250 – Business Law I for ACCT and BUAD while CIS has the choice of BLAW2250 or BLAW3280 – Cyber Business Law. Additionally, all three disciplines include information technology components: BUAD1800 (Introduction to Information Technology) and CIS 2000 (Spreadsheet Applications) for ACCT and BUAD while CIS students take CIS 1090 (Introduction to Computer Applications). ACCT and BUAD students must also take CIS 3100 (Information Systems and Technology in Business).

All three disciplines updated their curriculum in the 2023-2024 academic year with the changes becoming effective in 2024-2025. Amongst the various changes was a change to a general education component that affected all three disciplines and was also related to the assurance of learning process. To increase the communication skills of our graduates, all three disciplines added a requirement for students to take either COMM1010 (Oral Communication) or COMM2500 (Interpersonal Communication). While previously students only had to take

BUAD2200, this addition to the core curriculum (even though technically listed under the general education area) helps enhance a key skillset needed by our graduates.

Current and Emerging Technologies in the Curriculum

Technology is a very important part of the School of Business. From the obvious use of current technologies in our Computer Information Systems major to the implementation of innovative technologies in our Business Administration major and the use of the most widely used accounting software by small and medium businesses, our curriculum implements innovative technologies even before they become mainstream. During the 2020 pandemic, faculty, staff, and students in the School of Business were prepared to move to a completely remote work environment because our online classroom processes were already in place. We deliver all three of our majors in person and fully online and our faculty pride themselves in presenting content with the same engagement and quality levels in both mediums. Moreover, to increase the engagement, our faculty used web conferencing to remotely teach lectures to those students that were not ready to come back to campus. These hybrid classes have been a great addition to our curriculum and some offerings are still in place.

For the same reason, as well as due to the increase of online curriculum offerings, several classes utilize immersive labs that require no special equipment for delivery - only a computer, a reliable internet connection, and an updated browser. These labs reproduce, for example, the tech-support lab where a student can easily repair a hard drive, modify an operating system, or even set up a whole network from their own dorm room. Faculty successfully implemented several industry recognized software packages in the classroom including Tableau (a data analytics and visualization software), Microsoft Project (a project management software), and Asana (a project management software).

Faculty have extensively used simulations in their classrooms. For example, in BUAD 4000 (Readings and Discussion – Entrepreneurship), Dr. Carmella Parker has utilized Biz-Café where student have an opportunity to set up a coffee shop and compete against each other based upon the decisions that they have made for their commercial entity.

One of the finance faculty, Dr. Mark Swanstrom, developed, launched, and provided expert advising for the Victory Financial Student-Managed Investment Fund (SMIF) in May 2023. He gave Accounting and Finance students three companies in the same industry and tasked the students with picking the one that would outperform the other two companies not chosen. Their choice was "Right" if their return was higher than the average return of the two not chosen. After a successful first year, the COBT students managing the SMIF demonstrated exceptional skill in managing investments, making astute recommendations across various sectors. They achieved correct recommendations in 9 out of 14 sectors and 9 out of 12 individual stocks. Impressively, their fund outperformed the Dow, Russell 2000, and MSCI World Index.

Looking to the future, faculty are preparing the merger of the browser-based labs with virtual reality technology so the experience that our students have in the classroom better represents what they will see at the job. Additionally, faculty members submitted an interactive, innovative classroom grant to the Board of Regents to fund the creation of a state-of-the-art classroom that

will allow our students to proactively prepare for the needs of the workforce. The idea for the classroom was to have software/hardware to create, record, and stream presentations; equipment for product prototype development (3D printing), and agile team meeting spaces. While the Board of Regents did not fund the grant initially, faculty members are submitting the grant again. Other efforts to increase technology in the classroom include the installation of additional Promethian boards in 2024-2025 and the creation of a recording lab for students.

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) and the challenges of using AI are key technology issues that the SBUS seeks to address as it moves forward. Effective Fall 2024, the SBUS has created an AI policy that is utilized by our faculty and students. The approved AI policy is as follows:

This policy will provide guidelines for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) specifically as it relates to the College of Business and Technology (COBT) at Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSULA). This policy aims to provide guidelines for the ethical and responsible use of AI technology by students, faculty, and staff.

This policy is in addition to the official University AI Policy, which can be found in the official list of University Policies.

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to use AI tools responsibly and ethically. This includes making sure that all AI content is properly cited and that the use of AI tools does not infringe on the copyright or intellectual property of others.

Any use of AI tools by students should be disclosed to the faculty member on record for the course, and any use of AI tools by faculty should be disclosed to students and colleagues. Students should refer to the instructions by the faculty member on record for the course to determine if they are allowed to use AI tools for each assignment.

The academic honesty policy must be adhered to with the use of AI tools: It is expected that the student will submit their own work and based on the policies set forth by the faculty member on record, they may use AI tools for editing, data analysis, or formatting.

The COBT AI Policy Working Group will review and update this policy as needed to ensure it remains effective. Violations of this policy will be treated as academic dishonesty and will be sent to the dean and/or director.

Several classes are now helping students understand Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it can be an excellent tool for the job if used properly. For example, the instructor of our Database class (CIS2980) asked students to create database queries via AI and analyze both the result of the query and the query itself to find any major differences and/or issues with the use of AI.

Faculty and staff within the College have been working with internal and external partners to maintain awareness of the potential uses and impacts of AI in the classroom. For example,

- Dr. Ron Martin, one of our advisory council members, shared a short paper that he put together, *Generative AI Intelligence is an Education Challenge*
- Ms. Sherri Voebel, NSU librarian, shared a presentation from the World Intellectual Property Organization titled *Presentation from World Intellectual Property Organization – Generative AI*
- The ULS system office launched *Empowering AI Literacy*, a micro credential pilot program. This micro credential focuses on quick mastery of specific AI skills, making it a practical and efficient way to learn. Developed collectively by all nine universities in the ULS with our students in mind, this program aims to equip faculty with essential AI literacy for success.

Additionally, faculty have taken part in cross functional teams to deliver presentations, nationally and internationally, regarding the impacts of AI. A few samples follow:

- Fair, M. and Parker C. (2023, May 24). *Current legal and regulatory approaches to AI in the global landscape*. [Scholarly presentation]. 37th Annual Phi Beta Delta International Conference. Online. <http://www.phibetadelta.org/>
- Gordy, D., Horton, E., Lowe, M., Miranda, V., and Prejean, E. (2024, April 3). *Artificial Intelligence: Introduction and effects in the business and educational world*. [Scholarly presentation] Tecnologico Comfenalco. Online.
- Abukhalaf, R., Gordy, D., Horton, E., Miranda, V., Prejean, E., and Upshaw, D. (2024, April 13). *Artificial Intelligence: What happens when it passes the real Touring Test*. [Scholarly presentation] FBD: ABIS Conference. Online. <https://fbdonline.org/past/>
- Miranda, V. and Prejean, E. (2023, October 19). *The Effects of AI on the Triple Bottom Line*. [Scholarly presentation] ICONSES Conference 2023. Online. Conference Content | International Conference on Social and Education Sciences – IConSES]

Curriculum Revisions

The SBUS has a curriculum process that is active, flexible, and agile. The faculty and students are major stakeholders in this curriculum process, but we also have external stakeholders such as the University of Louisiana System, Board of Regents, alumni, and others that give input into this process. Curriculum revisions are active, as these revisions do not wait for a pre-determined timeline. The SBUS revises the curriculum as faculty find, study, and acknowledge the need for them. A faculty member, a student, an alumnus, or even the Board of Supervisors can initiate these revisions. Once the revisions have been shared with the faculty (curriculum review committee in our department is normally all faculty in the area/major), all faculty members have time to study, research, and discuss the appropriateness of the revisions. If the faculty decides that the need for a revision exists, a vote is requested, and when approved, the changes move to the Curriculum Review Committee at the University Level.

Our curriculum process is flexible, as it allows curriculum changes to filter horizontally to other programs. For example, by modifying the requirements of our three Computer Information Systems concentrations to allow for elective options instead of fixed requirements, we provided our students with an easier path to move to graduate level studies in our MS in Computer

Information Systems. Our curriculum process is also agile. Because our faculty, advisory boards, students, staff, and other stakeholders have a continuous conversation about the needs of the job market, we created a process that could implement changes to our curriculum in a swift manner so our students would not be negatively impacted by AoL administrative processes or curriculum changes that did not result in the expected success.

When a curriculum change is proposed, the change is discussed, voted on, and sent to the university committee as quickly as possible. If the change does not have the expected outcome, the change is rolled back and a new change proposed. This iterative process has been especially effective with the quickly changing needs of the technology fields. For example, based on industry trends, the SBUS developed a new concentration, Core Programming, to allow for several programming languages to be introduced into the curriculum. Unfortunately, this concentration failed to thrive for several reasons (lack of student interest, faculty resources, university resources) so the SBUS rolled it back quickly. Most recently, faculty saw a possible resource savings measure by combining two of our concentrations: Network and Systems Management and Cyber Security. Curriculum changes were presented to the faculty, discussed and approved. These changes will allow for more student flexibility and a newly named concentration that is not only market ready but also resource saving.

All changes are faculty driven based upon business and industry feedback, workforce development needs, and student needs. The file labeled “Curriculum Changes Since AY2021” found in the appendix shows a summary of the curriculum changes that the SBUS has made since the 2020-2021 academic year. These are the curriculum changes that the SBUS submitted to the Curriculum Review Committee who then approved them. We address changes within the curriculum that do not require approval by the Curriculum Review Committee later in this document.

Promotion of Positive Societal Impact

Filtering down from the University core values of students as a priority, diversity as our defining path, and a firm focus on the future, the SBUS developed a curriculum in all three degrees and the graduate degree that promotes student success, encourages diversity, and excels at providing a transformational innovative future for our students. In Fall 2023, 183 of our students in the SBUS were first generation students from rural areas that had limited exposure and opportunities to make a positive impact in society.

Several of our curriculum offerings, and their associated experiential learning opportunities, provide our students with an outlet to learn from and impact the local and regional areas. For example, students in the BUAD capstone class worked to create a business plan to help a local non-profit organization, the Legacy Café, grow and become more successful in the community they serve. Most recently, a different cohort of students is working with the Fuller Center for Housing of Northwest Louisiana to develop marketing techniques to help the center broaden their reach. A group of students, winners of our Innovative Business Plan Competition “Inferno Pitch”, developed a product that won a statewide entrepreneurship competition. Other community outreach projects include projects with Sabine Parish (restoration project), Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce, and the Association for the Preservation of Historic

Natchitoches. Students have also worked with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) where they were introduced to the impact that this organization has in the community by conducting a site visit and discussing the role, impact and widespread reach of the organization in our community.

The Computer Information Systems capstone projects (CIS3900/CIS4600 classes) for the last five years included several projects to assist the business and community as follows:

FALL23/SPRING24: SBUS Faculty and Staff Dashboard to maintain and keep track of tasks to be completed by the faculty/staff. Requested by the Director of the SBUS.

FALL22/SPRING23: Security Auditing Tracking System. Requested by Cyber Security Consulting Organization.

FALL21/SPRING22: Shoreline Data System for the Sabine River Authority of Louisiana. Requested by Sabine River Authority.

FALL20/SPRING21: Apex: web enabled system that will allow authorized users to upload, access, and compare reports about fluid, materials, usage, and cost in drill implementations. The system should also calculate and create an invoice upon completion of the drill based on report uploads. Requested by Apex Management.

Additionally, our International Business class exposes students to export opportunities. We also encourage them to become members of PBD – the Honor Society for International Scholars. Both provide an outlet for our students to become familiar with international opportunities that may lead to international studies abroad, international job opportunities, or international entrepreneurial success.

Our SBUS Closet provides free business attire for students and community members that are ready to enter the job market, attend a career fair, or be part of a round of interviews. These opportunities not only help the communities being served, but they also help our students develop into business leaders that understand societal impact and are able to continue implementing it in their future roles.

Strategy to Recruit and Retain Diverse Students

As a guiding principle of NSU, “Diversity helps define who we are. We welcome and respect everyone traveling on a journey for knowledge. Differences make us stronger.”, diversity is strongly present in all the institution’s efforts. The institution strives to foster an environment in which all individuals are respected and valued for their different backgrounds, interests, experiences, and cultural and intellectual perspectives. To achieve this goal, specific recruitment efforts at the university area are centered in the recruitment office. Recruiters conduct visits across the state where they present programs at the university to high schools and counselors. In the last few years, the previous president initiated a very strong focus on recruiting international students to attend our institution. Most of these international students are from countries in Central and South America with strong numbers from Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico. In

lesser numbers, our institution also hosts students from European countries (Spain, France, Italy). Our institution also created the Center for Inclusion and Diversity. This center sponsors programs throughout the year that focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the institution.

At the SBUS, our strategies to recruit and retain diverse learners follow our institution's strategy very closely. Our faculty attends recruiting events with information and materials that reflect our diverse student population. The SBUS currently has a faculty makeup that includes international perspectives as well as local, regional, and national perspectives. At the SBUS, we have made efforts to have a more diverse faculty that closely represents our student body. For example, we were able to hire an international professor that provides a much needed different and diverse perspective to our students.

NSU signed bilateral international agreements with the following countries and universities:

Argentina - [Universidad de Mendoza](#)

China - [Shenzhen University, Shenzhen](#)

Colombia - [Fundacion Universitaria Colombo Internacional](#), [Universidad Tecnologica de Bolivar](#), [Universidad Libre](#), and [Universidad de Antioquia](#)

Costa Rica - [Universidad Latina de Costa Rica](#)

Ecuador - [Universidad de Cuenca](#) and [Universidad de Los Hemisferios](#)

France - [University of Angers](#), [Pole Universitaire Leonard de Vinci](#), [TALM- Angers \(School of Art\)](#), and [University of Toulon](#)

Italy - [University of Pisa](#)

Japan - [Kanagawa University](#)

Nepal - [Kathmandu College of Management](#) and [Institute of Crisis Management Studies](#)

Spain - [Universidad de Alicante](#)

Uruguay - [Universidad ORT Uruguay](#)

Mexico - [Universidad Veracruzana](#), [Universidad de Quintana Roo](#), and [Instituto Tecnologico Superior de Xalapa](#)

Each semester the SBUS welcomes students from many of these regions and many of our students have taken part in the international exchange program to experience different countries and cultures.

The SBUS has also prioritized serving diverse learners. For the past several years, one of the key faculty initiatives has been the promotion of diversity, inclusion, and equity. Faculty members have participated in professional development opportunities from the university and have hosted some professional development seminars themselves. We have hosted Lunch and Learns about making sure documents are accessible to different learners and are ADA compliant as well as a general session on diversity. One of our faculty members has sponsored the Cultural Exploration Organization. Faculty have also participated in a Women in Business Week to add visibility and encourage the presence of females in the business world.

Assurance of Learning (AOL) Program

The SBUS has a robust Assurance of Learning (AoL) program. During this past cycle, our students completed assurance of learning assessments at several points in their degree progress. Our program has four shared AoLs and one AoL that is major specific. Measures for those five AoLs were conducted sequentially: the four shared AoLs during one calendar year, and the major specific AOL the next year. In the five-year cycle, we completed all five AoL measurements at least twice. Assigned, faculty-driven committees review these AoLs yearly. Committee members review the AoLs, the measures, and the outcomes and provide the information to all members of the faculty with recommended changes. If committee members recommend changes, the SBUS conducts a vote and implements changes to AoLs measures if the faculty vote is passed. Committee members can also introduce curriculum changes during this time as needed due to measurement results. As mentioned previously, one of the most transcendental changes to the curriculum that has happened during this cycle is the inclusion of a second Communications class for all majors. Industry partners and AOL results strongly supported this change. Other examples are:

- Content review in sequence classes – Instructors in several of our sequence classes have implemented a content review during the first part of the lesson to “reactivate” the content learned previously.
- Do you want to know more? Do you want more practice? – Some of our courses now provide specific areas in their online presence that provides scaffolding techniques to both help the students remember the content that they may have forgotten or increase their knowledge with more information about specific subjects.
- Content evaluation – Faculty review the scores of the School of Business Knowledge Exam to identify the areas that need extra support and provide resources and help.

Also, as a needed reaction to workforce, institutional and accreditation needs, the faculty has been and is continuing the process of “reimagining our AoLs”. During the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years, the faculty met several times to evaluate the current AoLs to ensure that they still represented the needs of our students, institution, and most importantly, the workforce needs. The SBUS sent curriculum changes to the Curriculum Review Committee and initial changes to the AoLs occurred in 2024-2025. These reimagined AOLs include direct and indirect measures where we hope they will provide additional insights into the preparation of our students to enter the workforce.

Listed below are the shared AOL goals for the School of Business that we have been using during this past accreditation cycle.

AoL 1. Effective Communicators. Students should be able to:

- Objective 1a: Produce professional quality business documents.
- Objective 1b: Deliver professional quality oral presentations; and
- Objective 1c: Demonstrate communication skills in team settings.

AoL 2. Integration of Knowledge across Business Disciplines. Students should be able to: Demonstrate understanding of key concepts and theories in various functional areas of business.

AoL3. Critical Thinking. Students should be able to:

- Objective 3a: Demonstrate the ability to draw on knowledge and insights from a variety of disciplines when analyzing and formulating solutions to problems and opportunities.
- Objective 3b: Demonstrate the ability to generate and compare alternatives solutions to business problems.
- Objective 3c: Demonstrate the ability to select feasible solutions to complex business problems.

AoL 4. Global, Cultural, and Ethical Perspective. Students should be able to: Identify cultural/global challenges facing management in doing business in the international arena.

The assessment process for the SBUS is as follows:

1. The SBUS alternates the assessment of its AoLs yearly. The SBUS assesses AoLs one to four, shared among the programs, during one assessment cycle. The SBUS assesses AoL five, unique to each program, during another assessment cycle. This approach allows for a complete program assessment every two years.
2. The SBUS utilizes a variety of assessment tools (quantitative, qualitative, direct, and indirect) to collect data for analysis for each of the five Assurance of Learning goals.
3. Data is collected and returned to the AoL Chairs.
4. The appropriate committees analyze the summary results to determine if students have achieved or “met” the measurable outcomes. When necessary, each AoL chairman in collaboration with the AoL committee members, faculty teaching specific courses, and the program coordinator, creates and proposes action steps for improvement.
5. Following discussion and review by appropriate personnel, faculty members responsible for teaching the courses tied to the AoL, implement the proposed action steps and recommended changes.
6. Individual meetings are held with faculty and staff as needed.
7. Additionally, committee members, in consultation with academic leadership, propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.
8. These proposed recommended action steps and recommended changes are implemented by the faculty responsible for teaching the courses tied to the AoL.
9. Additionally, a report is sent each year for each major to a University coordinator. This report contains the AOLs, their measurements, targets, objectives, and results. It also contains actions already taken, their results, and future actions. The coordinator places these reports online on the [Institutional Effectiveness website](#).

Faculty are involved in the data gathering process, decision making process, report writing process, and change/action process. Additionally, using the merit sheet, all faculty are encouraged to think about how they can change their classes to better support the various assurance of learning objectives. The document, Faculty Support for AoLs and Changes Due to AoLs, shows how faculty support the AoLs in their classes and some of the changes that faculty have made due to the AoL reports. As previously discussed, a key example of a curriculum

change due in part to AoL results is the inclusion of COMM1010 or COMM2050 in the degree programs.

The University has used direct and indirect measures as part of the AoL process. For the AoLs used during the past few years, most of the measurements are direct measurements where a particular assignment, test, or activity is graded within a class. For objective 1c (Students should be able to demonstrate communication skills in team settings), the main measurement is based on a team presentation which AACSB considers an indirect measurement. Effective 2024-2025, the SBUS will also be incorporating the survey results from a graduating student survey directly into the AoL process. The addition of these indirect measurements will supplement the direct measurement in the process. Table 7 shows the measurements that the SBUS has utilized over the last few years.

Table 7. AOL Assessment Descriptions.

Class	Assessment	Measure
BUAD2200	Pre-test that includes an objective exam and a written email letter	1a.1 - D
MGT 4300/CIS 4600	Students are required to create a business letter addressing a business problem and deliver the letter as an attachment	1a.2 - D
UNIV1000	Students are required to create a business letter addressing a business problem and deliver the letter as an email attachment.	1a.3 - D
BUAD2200	Students are required to create a business letter addressing a business problem and deliver the letter as an email attachment	1a.4 - D
BUAD2200	Students are required to develop and deliver a 20-minute presentation about conducting business in a foreign country	1b - D
MKTG3230	Students are divided into small groups (3 to 4 students) and are required to develop a marketing plan for a new product. In addition to developing a written report, the groups are required to orally present their reports.	1c - I
BUAD2120	Portions of the School of Business Knowledge Exam (SoBUSKE) are given in BUAD 2120 (Basic Business Statistics)	2.1 - D
FIN2150	Portions of the School of Business Knowledge Exam (SoBUSKE) are given in FIN 2150 (Personal Finance)	2.1 - D
MKTG3230	Portions of the School of Business Knowledge Exam (SoBUSKE) are given in MKTG 3230 (Principles of Marketing).	2.1 - D
UNIV1000	Complete SoBUSKE	2.2 - D
MGT 4300/CIS 4600	Complete SoBUSKE	2.3 - D
FIN3090	Critical Thinking Quiz	3.1 - D
FIN4200	Business Simulation Game	3.2 - D
FIN3090	Case Study	3.3 - D
BUAD2000	Country report	4.1 - D
BUAD 3270	International Business Plan	4.2 - D
BUAD 3270	Partial SoBUSKE	4.3 - D

While not part of the official AoL process, the SBUS does consider other indirect data that helps inform the curriculum. As a primary example, the SBUS hosts advisory council meetings on an annual basis. These meetings allow the SBUS to engage with industry partners and alumni and get their feedback on workforce trends, the various curricula, and student learning. These interactive sessions include discussions of soft skills and hard skills. As one example, at the last advisory council, the members focused heavily on soft skills. At a subsequent faculty meeting, the faculty members discussed how to address these soft skills needs. The SBUS is then able to take these needed skills and incorporate them in appropriate locations in the curriculum. The SBUS also conducts surveys of the advisory council. During the 2023-2024 academic year, as part of the AoL redesign process, the SBUS specifically asked advisory council members for their input on the most important student learning outcomes.

Additionally, faculty members gather indirect data from students in their classrooms that the faculty member, or the larger SBUS, can then utilize to make changes. In one of the capstone courses, a faculty member requests students give a personal reflection about their experience in the class and their readiness for the project. This reflection also gives the students an opportunity to say how they would have improved their learning. Additionally, as they are working on teams, their perspectives give key insights into their views on communication within the curriculum.

Another faculty member, who helps oversee the Student Advisory and Outreach Board, engaged the students in that group to get their feedback on items such as the mission, vision, strategic plan, and student learning outcomes. This same faculty member also gathered feedback from the students in her classes regarding their perceptions of how well they learned different aspects of student learning.

A list of the measurements used during this accreditation cycle, the results of those measurements, whether those measurements were met, and the actions taken because of those results are shown in Table 5.1 (bachelor's degree programs on first tab and master's degree program on second tab) which is found in the appendix.

Learner Demographics, Enrollment Trends, and Implications

As with other institutions in higher education, the last five years have seen a declining trend in the institution's enrollment. The SBUS has also followed this declining trend as seen in Table 8. Please see Table 9 for semester-by-semester enrollment by ethnicity, gender, and age group and their change over the last three years.

Table 8. Semester Enrollment by Major.

Major	SP21	FA21	SP22	FA22	SP23	FA23	SP24
071 - Business Analytics (PBC)			1	1	1	1	
101 – ACCT	246	234	206	177	152	153	139
102 - CIS	202	232	188	191	183	194	185
110 - BUAD	505	542	437	434	392	413	328
597 - CIS (MS)	13	11	12	12	13	16	14

Table 9. Enrollment by Ethnicity, Gender, and Age Group.

	AY 21-22			AY 22-23			AY 23-24		
Student Demographics	SU21	FA21	SP22	SU22	FA22	SP23	SU23	FA23	SP24
By Ethnicity									
Asian	5	12	12	6	12	11	5	11	9
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	5	7	4	8	8	4	10	8
Black or African American	93	291	225	88	220	196	76	237	201
Hispanic	30	80	68	20	57	47	19	42	40
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
White, Non-Hispanic	234	613	523	192	500	443	157	439	397
Foreign/Non-Resident	4	24	20	5	20	26	3	19	16
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	11	21	17	5	18	20	7	18	12
Two or More Races	17	59	43	12	46	46	15	52	47
By Gender									
Male	147	510	424	130	422	389	123	410	366
Female	249	597	493	203	460	409	163	418	364
By Age Group									
Under 20	72	447	333	76	381	315	83	351	282
21 to 24	115	295	275	97	216	218	77	209	194
25 and Up	209	365	309	160	285	265	126	268	254

Given the decline in enrollment, the University has a renewed focus on retention and recruiting. This area is a key priority of our new president. One of the primary implications for our recruiting and retention is the need to note that our students come from diverse backgrounds and the way we serve them needs to reflect that diversity.

Identification, Intervention and Support for Learners Not Progressing Adequately

There are several alert measures used by the SBUS faculty that help identify learners that need support and intervention during the regular semester. These measures are based on attendance, grades, and faculty supervision. The University requires formal submission of five-week grades and midterm grades. Students that are identified as needing help (F or D grades) receive a personal notification from the faculty member and the Dean of the College of Business and Technology that offers help and provides information about the services offered by the College and the Institution (tutoring, mentoring, library services, and others). Apart from these institutional based measures, faculty members normally keep attendance and a gradebook.

When a faculty member identifies a student not attending class, not submitting assignments as required, or receiving low performing grades, faculty are encouraged to follow up with them. To support this last interaction, the SBUS has piloted an Early Student Alert System. This system allows faculty members to submit the names of students having problems in the classroom, missing classes, assignments, or underperforming, to the administration. The administration follows up with an email and a phone call directly to the student to try to identify the issues and provide solutions. This Early Student Alert System was piloted in Fall 2023 with extremely satisfactory results. The system identified several students, and solutions were provided that allowed the students to perform better in the classroom.

If the student does not perform well during a full semester and his/her GPA falls under the required 2.0, the student is placed under Academic Probation (AP). This AP allows the student to register for classes for the semester normally under the supervision of the Academic Advisor. Students have a semester to improve their GPA to over 2.0 to go back to a Good Standing status. If the student falls under the required 2.0 GPA while on Academic Probation, the student is placed under Academic Suspension (AS) for a semester. Students are unable to register for classes for a semester. The student can file an appeal with the Registrar's office that allows him/her to register for the AS semester. This appeal is normally accompanied by an academic plan prepared by the academic advisor, the student support services area, and the student. If the appeal is approved, the student can register for the semester. If not, the student must wait for a semester to register. After the AS is approved, the student has a semester to increase his/her GPA to the required 2.0. If the plan is not followed and/or the student does not meet the required GPA, the student is placed under Academic Suspension for a year.

Continuous Improvement Activities for Faculty: Teaching Enhancement

The faculty in the SBUS have many opportunities to improve their already high-quality teaching. University-level administration provides continuing education courses offered by the Electronic and Continuing Education office. Internally, we have monthly Lunch and Learns that cover different topics from innovative teaching techniques to new and developing trends in pedagogy. Most recently, we have had AI software presentations for utilization in the classroom, Emergenetics to better understand our students, and publisher presentations to help faculty better utilize their products. Other instructional sessions included a presentation from members of the Electronic and Continuing Education regarding professional development opportunities, Quality

Matters instruction utilizing the SBUS internal Quality Matters Committee, as well as professional conferences and scholarly presentations and publications.

The SBUS also takes guidance from AACSB on teaching, strategic planning, and other areas. SBUS faculty and administration members have attended the following AACSB conferences/events in the last few years:

- AACSB How to Transform Business Education for Positive Societal Impact (Fall 2023)
- AACSB and Societal Impact: Aligning with the 2020 Accreditation Standards (Spring 2023)
- AACSB Webinar – Preparing Higher Ed Students for Future Careers in Times of Uncertainty (Spring 2023)
- AACSB Associate Dean’s Conference (Fall 2022)
- AACSB Invited Presentation – Miranda, V.E., & Read, C. (2022). ESG: Business School Relevance and the Aspirations of Students. In AACSB Innovative Curriculum Conference.
- AACSB Strategic Planning and Societal Impact Workshop (Fall 2022)
- AACSB Webinar – Education, Empower, Elevate: Preparing the next generation for a modern workplace (Fall 2022)
- AACSB Continuous Improvement Review Workshop (Spring 2022)
- AACSB ICAM Conference (Spring 2022)
- AACSB Innovative Curriculum Conference (Spring 2022)
- AACSB Innovative Curriculum Conference (Spring 2021)
- AACSB Webinar – The Art of Principles-Based Standards, Part 1 – Spotlight on Standard 3 (Fall 2020)
- AACSB Webinar – The Art of Principles-Based Standards, Part 2 – Standards 4 – 7 (Fall 2020)
- AACSB Webinar – The Art of Principles-Based Standards – Standards 8 – 9 (Fall 2020)

The SBUS is a place where innovative ideas are encouraged, supported, and developed. Most recently, faculty members attended a presentation at a different institution where new hardware was being used in the classroom. This hardware was presented, evaluated, and implemented in one of our classrooms in less than three months. Faculty were able to train and implement the hardware in the classroom quickly. Plans to implement this hardware in other classrooms are already in place. Training for the rest of the faculty will be developed and presented as well.

Student evaluations and teaching evaluations are also used in the SBUS. Faculty are evaluated every semester formally by the students. Administration also evaluates classroom teaching at least once a year. These evaluations are reviewed by the faculty member and if needed, discussed with other faculty members in the same department and administration. Ideas, changes, and modifications are normally implemented very quickly, sometimes in the same semester they occur, if not the following semester.

Thought Leadership, Engagement, and Societal Impact

Thought leadership, engagement, and societal impact is another vital area within the SBUS.

Intellectual Contributions

The completed Intellectual Contributions Section, Table 8-1, includes the summary of intellectual contributions by Northwestern State University School of Business faculty by discipline over the AACSB Accreditation Cycle.

The table highlights the aggregate summary of contributing faculty by discipline in the following areas:

Portfolio which includes the basic or discovery scholarship, application scholarship and teaching and learning scholarship of faculty from each discipline, and,

Types of intellectual contributions encompassing peer-reviewed journal articles, additional peer or editorial reviewed intellectual contributions, and lastly, all other intellectual contributions.

ACCT faculty contributed 24.54 contributions to the total number of 214.24 SBUS Portfolio contributions. The highest number of these contributions is in Teaching and Learning Scholarship, 11.95. Applied or Integration Application Scholarship category provided 9.54 contributions. Portfolio contributions in the category of Basic or Discovery Scholarship are 3.05 contributions.

The types of intellectual contributions contributed by the Accounting Discipline included 7.77 peer-reviewed journal articles, 6.28 additional peer or editorial reviewed intellectual contributions, with the largest number of intellectual contributions being attributed to “All Other” intellectual contributions, 10.49. The total aggregate number for types of intellectual contributions is 24.54 contributions.

BUAD, FIN, MGT, MKGT, and BLAW faculty provided 136.96 contributions of the total 214.24 SBUS Portfolio contributions. The highest number of the 136.96 contributions to the total SBUS Portfolio contributions are in Applied or Integration/Application Scholarship being 49.61 contributions, followed closely by the Basic or Discovery Scholarship category of intellectual contributions, 47.00 Portfolio of Intellectual Contributions. Faculty completed 40.35 contributions in the Portfolio category of Teaching and Learning Scholarship. A more specific breakdown by each BUAD discipline is found in Table 8-1.

The breakdown across all types of intellectual contributions in the BUAD, FIN, MGT, MKTG, and BLAW disciplines contributed 136.96 to the aggregate 214.24 total types of intellectual contributions. The category breakdown across the three types of intellectual contributions attributes the major types of intellectual contributions to the “All Other” Intellectual Contributions category as 85.77 of the 136.96 total contributions. Additional peer or editorial reviewed intellectual contributions was the second highest category of contributions with 33.66 contributions followed by 17.53 contributions from the peer-reviewed journal articles category type of intellectual contributions.

CIS faculty contributed 52.74 intellectual contributions to the total SBUS Portfolio contributions with the highest number in the category of Teaching and Learning Scholarship at 24.42

contributions. The second highest number of CIS Portfolio contributions came from the Basic or Discovery Scholarship category providing 20.81 contributions. CIS faculty Applied or Integration/Application Scholarship contributions are 7.51 contributions toward the Portfolio of Intellectual Contributions.

The breakdown across all types of intellectual contributions in the Computer Information Systems (CIS) Discipline provides 52.74 contributions to the overall SBUS 214.24 intellectual contributions. The major two types of contribution categories are “All Other” intellectual contributions and Additional peer or editorial reviewed intellectual contributions with 19.54 and 17.67 contributions, respectively. Peer reviewed journal articles comprised the remaining 15.53 intellectual contributions.

The percentage of total full time equivalent (FTE) faculty procuring intellectual contributions by discipline is:

83.1% from the Accounting Discipline,
84.1% from the Business Administration Discipline,
95.4% from the Computer Information Systems Discipline,
100.0% from the Finance Discipline,
100.0% from the Management Discipline,
100.0% from the Marketing Discipline, and
100.0% from the Business Law Discipline.

The percentage of total participating faculty procuring intellectual contributions by discipline is:

83.3% from the Accounting Discipline,
90.0% from the Business Administration Discipline,
100.0% from the Computer Information Systems Discipline,
100.0% from the Finance Discipline,
100.0% from the Management Discipline,
100.0% from the Marketing Discipline, and
100.0% from the Business Law Discipline.

In analyzing these results, the SBUS recognizes that the portfolio of intellectual contributions focuses mainly on Teaching and Learning Scholarship with 76.72 contributions from this category. A close second can be seen in the category of Basic or Discovery Scholarship with 70.86 contributions. Applied or Integration/Application Scholarship accounts for 66.66 of the 214.24 total scholarly contributions. Faculty are aligning intellectual contributions with primary teaching and student education facilitation in higher education and scholarly work associated with the application and integration of experiential applications to the workplace. There are several excellent examples of the societal impact the faculty address through intellectual contributions, following are a few examples of these contributions:

Liao, W., Abukhalaf, R., & Powell, J. (2022). COVID-19's effect on study hours for business students transitioning to online learning. *Journal of Education for Business*. DOI: 1080/08832323.2022.2103488.

Miranda, V., Abukhalaf, R., & Aldredge, M. (2022, March 4) *The increasing career readiness for accounting, Computer Information Systems, and Finance Majors*. [Scholarly presentation]. Association of Business Information Systems (ABIS/ABC) conference – Southwest 2022 Annual Meeting (FBD Conference).

Aldredge, M., Abukhalaf, R., & Miranda, V. (2022, March 3). *Repositioning the Skill Sets of the Accounting Profession*. [Scholarly panel]. American Accounting Association – Southwest 2022 Annual Meeting (FBD Conference).

Fair, M.B. (2022, November). *The ethical implications of representing clients with diminished capacity*. [Scholarly presentation – continuing legal education]. Northwestern State University Fall CLE Series.

Prejean, E. A. (2022, April). *The evolution of sexual harassment to power-based violence*. [Scholarly presentation – continuing legal education course]. Northwestern State University Spring CLE Series.

Parker, C. (2020, March 5). *COVID business interruption claim decisions that could impact insurance e-policy development*. [Scholarly presentation]. Association of Business Information Systems. 2022 Federation of Business Disciplines National Conference.

Pharris, L., Hardy, M., & Powel, J. (2021). Student self-regulation: A closer look at differences in time management practices of computer information systems, accounting, and business majors across age and gender. *Journal of Research in Business Information Systems*, ISSN 1941-8515, 14 (1).

Miranda, V., Prejean, E., Parker, C., and Liao, W. (2022) Exploring Financial Risk Management. *American International Journal of Business Management (AIJBM)*, 5(12), 12-22. <https://www.aijbm.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/L512112123.pdf> ISSN-2379-106X.

Esteves-Miranda, V., Weiwen Liao, Elizabeth Abington Prejean, & Carmella Parker. (2021). Incorporating ESG strategy in DEI for leadership roles in higher education. *American International Journal of Business Management (AIJBM)*, 4(09), 75–82. <https://www.aijbm.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/J497583.pdf>

Prejean, E., Aldredge, M. M., Kilcoyne, M. S., Liao, W., & Parker, C. (2020). Lessons learned during turbulent times to weather and thrive in the storm of COVID-19. *Deleted Journal*, 8(11), 276–288. <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijier.vol8.iss11.2744>

The SBUS faculty are also publishing in a variety of different journals. Table 2-2 in the appendix shows a listing of these various journals.

To encourage faculty to produce high quality and impactful intellectual contributions, the SBUS Promotion, Retention, and Tenure Committee and Merit Committee reviewed current peer

school business schools' policies and other national business school intellectual contributions policies concurrently with review of the existing NSU School of Business policies and requirements for publication rankings. The SBUS then approved and implemented these revised guidelines as part of the Faculty Qualifications and Sufficiency Criteria. Based on these guidelines, the School of Business faculty contributions are within the scope of expectations for portfolio contributions and type of intellectual contributions.

Following is a key passage from the SBUS guideless explaining the journal criteria:

Academic journals must be relevant to the mission of the School of Business. Acceptable academic journals include those with acceptance rates of 50% or less as indexed by leading bibliographic sources, are frequently cited, and are readily available to researchers through major academic libraries and the internet. Cabell's and the Australian Business Dean's Council are recommended but not required. If the journal does not meet those standards, a faculty member will justify to the School of Business Merit Committee how the publication aligns with the School of Business mission, teaching, and local economic development. Normally, conference proceedings, non-peer-reviewed journals, and vanity press titles are not acceptable. In addition, the journal publication must adhere to the School of Business Predatory Journal Policy and not appear on a predatory list or be in a pay-to-publish journal.

An additional section from the guidelines highlights further alignment between the policy and the mission, vision, and goals of the SBUS:

Societal impact covers a wide range of areas. However, the School of Business has chosen to focus on "supporting regional economic development and societal betterment activities." One way to support this focus is through research in this area. To incentivize the study of topics in this area by faculty members, articles published in scholarly journals with an acceptance rate of up to 65% will be considered acceptable sustained engagement activities if the faculty member can clearly show how the publication relates to "supporting regional economic development and societal betterment activities."

To reward faculty working to elevate their scholarly activity and actively seek to align their goals with the mission, goals, and new focus points of the SBUS and AACSB, the Professorship Committee developed the following questions for aspiring recipients to answer during the application process:

1. If awarded, how do you plan to use the professorship funds to increase the societal impact of the School of Business?
2. If awarded, how do you plan to use the professorship funds to integrate the AOL recommendations and results into your classes?
3. If awarded, how do you plan to use the professorship funds to support the School of Business Strategic Plan?
4. If awarded, how do you plan to use the professorship funds to implement the feedback provided by the Advisory Council and/or Industry Partners?
5. If awarded, how do you plan to use the professorship funds to obtain or maintain your AACSB qualified status?

Activities Supporting Positive Societal Impact

In an ongoing effort to support SBUS relationships with external stakeholders and the creation of faculty and student scholarships, the SBUS developed numerous opportunities for faculty, student and external stakeholder relationships. Core activities and the range of engagements include an ongoing uptick in the number of guest speakers to our campus, internship opportunities, entrepreneurial business development competitions, career fairs, experiential learning, and community service-centered projects. The file labeled “Events and Guest Speakers” includes a list of events and speakers along with their related purpose and impact here. Currently there are over one hundred listed guest speakers and events.

By aligning our core activities and initiatives with our mission, strategies and expected outcomes to reach out to our community and engage society at large, many businesses school faculty actively participate in numerous NSU organizations, local, national and international societies, boards, industry specific academic organizations, and business community organizations. Several faculty provided their services to assist in Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) efforts within our community. A SBUS faculty member received the Louisiana State Volunteer Award in 2023. Faculty serve on external boards such as the United Way of Central Louisiana, Association for the Preservation of Natchitoches, and the Catholic Archdiocese, to name a few. Faculty continue to serve various associations associated with the Federation of Business Disciplines (FBD) in numerous industry-specific academic organizations. Faculty within organizations such as the Association of Business Information Systems (ABIS), Association of Marketing Educators (ACME), Association of Business Communications (ABC) and others serve in positions of leadership as active board members, presenters, and editorial review positions. The majority of faculty present at multiple conferences within their department areas to enhance the academic realm and provide societal impact in the areas of Accounting, Business and Computer Information Systems.

The SBUS offers Continuing Legal Education through seminars presented at Northwestern to fill the need for local lawyers to receive seminar credits where local meetings for continuing legal education are unavailable. The SBUS offers these seminars in the fall and spring semesters. Through these seminar outreach programs attendees may earn up to five or six credit hours of credit.

The NSU SBUS faculty has engaged the community and its students in several ways to enhance community spirit. For example, the student honor society Beta Alpha Psi (for Accounting, CIS and Finance majors, minors and concentrations) supports students in their academic and community outreach efforts. The Federation of Business Leadership Association (FBLA) annually hosts the student leadership conference and a Christmas Drive. The SBUS faculty and community leaders actively participate as FBLA organizational leaders and judges. Faculty have worked as leaders, members and international liaisons actively seeking to engage faculty, staff, students and community members to participate in the language and culture series of the Phi Beta Delta Eta Mu Chapter International Honor Society. The Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce organized the Best of Natchitoches Event to network and collaborate with local business and industry with the SBUS participating. The Dean’s Executive Board Council meets

annually to identify the needs of the community workforce and to jointly determine any newly revised or improved curricular needs.

Preparing students for the business world, the SBUS is proud to highlight that in 2023 eight School of Business students were ranked in the Top 10 for the Excel Microsoft Office Specialist Exam in Louisiana. A SBUS faculty members gives students an opportunity to conduct real world financial decision-making, which has a financial impact on the SMIF. After the first year, students did an outstanding job as they made correct recommendations in 9 out of 14 sectors and 9 out of 12 individual stocks. School of Business students beat the Dow, Russell, and Global stock index, but trailed the S&P and Nasdaq overall. Monthly updates are available and accessible at:

<https://victoryfinancial.substack.com/p/year-1-is-in-the-books?r=1mpzv2>

School of Business students created a needs assessment for the Association of Preservation of Historic Natchitoches (APHN) while also making recommendations for increased exposure for fundraising efforts. In their inspired enthusiasm to assist the local organization, the students formed an NSU student organization to continue supporting the mission of APHN. Students are meeting regularly to spread the mission of the group to other students and faculty on campus. Students worked with Cane River Kitchenware Company as they expanded their business to include Sweet D's, a second location. Students helped to audit the first location to prepare for the new location and set up a marketing plan for the new location, including NSU athletics and other organizations on campus. and expand their marketing efforts while introducing the new location. During the year, students provide food service assistance at the Share A Meal events in coordination with the Natchitoches Coalition for Homeless. This effort serves to support the homeless and underserved population within our community.

Students also developed an application for the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce for local businesses to use in requesting help from our students. They collaborated with the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, reviewing businesses in the local Natchitoches Chamber and community and making recommendations for the type of projects students could assist with. In the future, classes will work with the Chamber members to continue to be effective for local businesses. Students worked with the Fuller Center, a local non-profit in Shreveport, which started as a response to the housing crisis created by an influx of Hurricane Katrina evacuees into the area. The organization continues to build low-income housing for residents of Shreveport and the surrounding areas with donations, a board, and volunteers. After completing a needs assessment, the students agreed to design a schedule of "email blasts" with recommended content and dates for Fuller Center's full-time employees to implement through the end of the year. They also revised the Fuller Center's existing email marketing strategy and software so that the employees could leverage it to increase the Fuller Center's reach. This strategy required the distribution of surveys to board members and to the public to garner feedback pertaining to the Fuller Center's reputation. They also connected with existing and potential donors, volunteers, and other stakeholders using surveys to gather data to assist in marketing and fundraising. They also helped generate content for social media posts to increase participation on platforms and optimize account visibility by increasing views. The program was successful for the company and the students added valuable skills to their future business consultant resumes.

Faculty actively engage in organizations and activities on the NSU campus. For example, faculty serve as members of The Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society, Eta Mu Chapter on campus and nationally. The School of Business faculty actively serve as Eta Mu Board members and provide international leadership as chairs and committee members at the International Honor Society level. At the annual International Conferences, our faculty presented topics that range from board development, international engagement, health and positivity to project management. Also, the SBUS actively represents our school and community's goals and directives in the NSU Faculty Senate.

Continued progress toward meeting the school's aspirations for societal impact over the past five years is apparent. Faculty have developed and completed a variety of experiential -based projects and service-oriented projects. For example, students from the School of Business participate as leaders in NSU's campus organization the Cultural Exploration Organization (CEO) which generates interest and funds associated with disaster-related events such the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, Maui wildfire, and recent Louisiana hurricane relief efforts. As we are all connected in this world, the societal impact of these events is felt around the world as well as throughout our communities. Care for one another contributes to the advancement of personal and professional societal responsibility among our students and faculty.

A faculty member conducted Emergenetics Workshops for external business stakeholders and NSU constituents, such as the Northwestern University Leadership IGNITE Program members, the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce and the NSULA SBUS faculty. These training programs enhance the participants' understanding and practical use of their core leadership and team strengths. They also provide valuable insights into ways in which we can communicate and work more effectively together as a team while recognizing the unique gifts each member has to offer to their personal and professional working relationships.

The SBUS faculty are engaged in developing the skills and technology related to the theory and practice of computer science. Recognizing the importance of reaching out to the community and engaging younger people in the computer information age, the CIS faculty reached out to the community and provided several learning programs and multiple computer coding activities to young children and students in the central Louisiana region. For example, the CIS faculty created the Hour of Code Event to support Computer Science Education Week. The target audience was elementary lab and middle school lab students, who were invited to participate in engaging coding activities. Its purpose was to enhance overall coding education and inspire local community students to engage in computer science learning and potential career interest. The Hour of Code sessions served approximately 500 elementary and middle school students. The Hour of Code is a worldwide movement to introduce youngsters to computer coding in a fun and engaging way. In addition to business faculty, students helped with the program as part of their service-learning initiatives. NSU's CIS program also sponsored the Demons Coding Club for students in third through eighth grade and offered the Demons Tech Clinic open to all ages for help with phones, tablets, PCs, Macs, hardware, and software.

Additionally, Northwestern State University partnered with the Orchard Foundation, the education arm of the Rapides Foundation to launch the Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership (CLIP) Program, a paid teacher residency program that develops middle school math

and science teachers for high-needs schools in central Louisiana. Middle School Math and Science teachers were given the chance to participate in workshops including networking and technology discovery. Northwestern State University was a key partner in the CLIP program, with the training facilitated by faculty in the School of Education and the School of Business. Participants who completed the program received a Master of Arts in Teaching degree and a professional teaching license. They also taught middle school math or science in a high-needs school. In 2021, eight individuals from central Louisiana completed the intense 15-month program and began their careers teaching. CLIP residents receive a stipend to cover tuition expenses and an annual stipend of \$36,000 during their residency. While completing their graduate coursework, CLIP residents work alongside a trained and experienced mentor teacher throughout the academic year in a high-needs school identified by the nine partner public school districts. Northwestern State University also trained the teachers in the school districts who mentored CLIP participants during their residencies. Another initiative was the CDC 3 Exploration Day event presented at the Marie Dunn Child Development Center (CDC), where participants reached out to 3- and 4-year-old children from CDC introducing them to hardware and software technologies discovery for very young children.

To better prepare our SBUS students to understand and apply human resource management skills, Central Louisiana Society for Human Resource Management (CLSHRM) professionals networked with SBUS faculty during a CLSHRM meeting to collaborate with local HR professionals for best practice recommendations and the promotion of two new course offerings at Northwestern. The target audience was external stakeholders in the Human Resources profession. The SBUS added a Human Resource concentration and offered the SHRM Certificate programs twice a year. A faculty member incorporated one of the SHRM certificates into an academic class in Spring 2024. This effort serves the students and the larger community.

In 2023, BUAD students working with the Sabine High School Revitalization Initiative for Sabine Parish (SHSRP) researched and identified issues and provided plausible solutions for building a case for moving forward with sustainability in mind for multi-projects in the Sabine High School Revitalization Project. SBUS students met with the City of Many mayor, City of Many representatives, and SHSRP Board members for an on-site visit and evaluation. Several viable sustainable options were proposed. These include the SHS Recreation Center with specific activities and realized costs associated with the internal building renovation, the creation of the indoor gymnasium and event space. Collected data and business proposals were developed, analyzed and presented to the SHSRP Board of Directors. Services related to after-school care and senior care were proposed for consideration based on the existing programs and other possibilities. Several potential options are still being explored to determine viable, sustainable projects and interest within the Sabine Parish community. An interesting student proposition is to work with the NSU Culinary Arts School regarding meals. SHSRP is considering a garden on-site for use by community members and for meal preparations. The healthcare component is by far the largest potential area for SHSRP sustainability and partnership with NSU-BCBSLA (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana). The College of Nursing and School of Allied Health Dean met and discussed possible working models and procedural/regulatory policies to be considered for NSU nursing students' potential involvement in off-site clinics in the future. To keep residents apprised of the efforts underway in our local community, a press release in the Natchitoches Journal was released citing the NSU School of Business student collaboration.

Student involvement and business school activities are paramount to developing stakeholder relationships within our community while creating viable business solutions and economic development to address the present restoration project needs for the abandoned high school and surrounding area. NSU's efforts in this community effort were recognized during a town meeting and celebration led by Mayor Hable, Senator Seabaugh, and U.S. House of Representatives Mike Johnson. The SBUS strives for excellence in providing our students theoretical business acumen and positive business experiences fostering achievement in entrepreneurial success.

NSU faculty and students make a positive societal impact through the opportunity to develop business competition plans to present at the Inferno Pitch Program Competition. Leaders from the Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (EAP) and selected community leaders are invited to act as the judges' panel and select the top three best proposals. To spur the nature of competition and engagement, SBUS faculty participate as mentors and provide leadership and guidance to the participants while dollar prizes are awarded (\$3,000, \$1,000, and \$500.) to the top three winners. The selected winners are invited to participate in the Pelican Cup Competition which is a state level entrepreneurship competition with the opportunity to win up to \$50,000 in prizes. In 2023, a School of Business team was awarded first place in the Louisiana Pelican Cup Competition.

To promote women entrepreneurs around the country, the SBUS partnered with other national universities and presented the Women's Entrepreneurship Workshop Panel at NSU celebrating Women's Entrepreneurship Week. Several local and regional women entrepreneurs impacted the College of Business and Technology audience as powerful role models and successful women in the business world shared their stories and messages of encouragement and value of business ownership.

Each year, students have been offered internships and summer employment throughout the academic year and upon graduation. Careers fairs and corporate presentations and recruitment events are available throughout the year and introduce potential new hires to a variety of opportunities in their given area of interest and degree aspirations. The SBUS has partnered with several companies providing internships and employment. Examples of a few participating companies include Fastenal, FDIC, the Louisiana Bankers' Association, and GDIT.

As time passes, societal impact will increase as the SBUS expands its learner base and offerings in collaboration with state and local community colleges. Articulation agreements have been implemented during the accreditation cycle with community colleges. In 2023, an articulation agreement between the NSU School of Business Administration program and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) is composed of 12 public technical and community colleges across Louisiana. LCTCS colleges collectively serve over 130,000 students in traditional credit instruction, workforce training, and adult education. Eighty percent of its over 25,000 annual graduates earned credentials in high-demand, high-income fields as defined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Each year, over 15,000 students transfer from an LCTCS institution to a 4-year university. The SBUS looks forward to engaging community college students in developing successful business careers at Northwestern State University.

In conclusion, per Table 9-1, faculty demonstrate a positive societal impact through internal and external initiatives and/or activities, consistent with the school's mission, strategies, and expected outcomes.