

# IMPACT CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Guyan Golf & Country Club



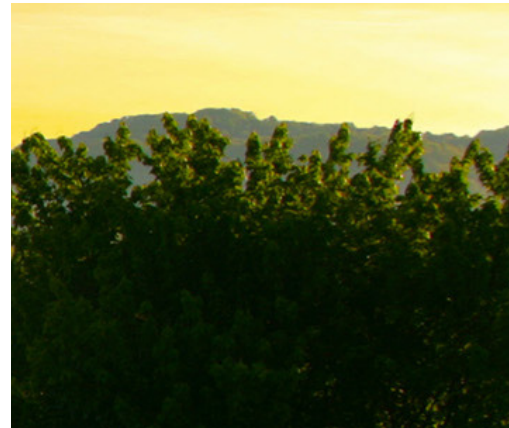
**AUGUST 16, 2018**

The inaugural Impact Conference brought together nearly 30 industry experts from the business community, government and not-for-profit sector, with the LCOB faculty to collaboratively brainstorm, share ideas, provide feedback, and offer suggestions for improvement.



The four Academic Divisions of the Lewis College of Business - Accounting & Legal Environment; Management & Health Care Administration; Finance, Economics & International Business; and Marketing, MIS & Entrepreneurship - conducted a strategic planning exercise by inviting members of Divisional Advisory Boards and College Advisory Board to join their faculty in brainstorming ways to improve curriculum, community impact, and external engagement.

Participating industry leaders provided deep insights and clear expectations concerning desired skill sets needed for graduates entering into the business field. Many items mentioned were those characteristics expected of any college graduate, such as social skills, communication expertise in writing and speaking, and professionalism. Additionally, businesses want to see graduates with good computer/internet abilities, problem solving ability, analytical and judgment aptitude as well as time management proficiency. The importance of graduates being self-starters and responsible citizens was also highlighted.



Although LCOB graduates were seen positively compared to those from other schools, there was a strong sentiment that most students are not prepared for the “real world” when they begin a job. They have difficulty in making a successful transition from academic life to the business sphere where interactions are on a different level. The industry leaders stressed on the need for the College of Business to work with their students to enhance their general social skills, communication skills, professionalism, accountability and interpersonal relations. Other critical success factors in the contemporary workplace include presentation skills, thinking processes, negotiation skills, and web and graphic design ability.

Regarding curriculum, all four groups emphasized the need to bring the business world into the academic world. Students need to have a clear understanding of the complexities on how businesses operate. Although students have specialized knowledge in their major field of study, they often don't see the big picture of how their field contributes to the overall performance of the business. While some advisory board members had very specific recommendations, there was a general consensus that students need more hands-on-learning and application of concepts to the business world . One suggestion was a new core course or additional training in “Professional Business Skills,” to ensure students have the desired skills, both social and academic, upon graduation. Some ideas were specific such as more math skills, ability to critique a financial statement, and ethics training. The need for more Microsoft Office education in various programs, including database management and spreadsheets was mentioned. It was suggested that business graduates obtain a Microsoft Certificate to show proficiency in this area.

Although there is a favorable perception of LCOB in the business community, business experts expressed a need for more interaction between students and the community before graduation. Some suggestions included job shadowing, co-op programs, business speakers' series, field trips, internships and practicums in specific fields built into the curriculum. Activities such as “Business after Hours” and “Town and Gown” events were also recommended as opportunities for students to both learn social skills and make connections. Offering such events on campus each semester was also put forth as a good training possibility.

Only a general overview of the discussions is offered here, but detailed notes were taken during the conference, and each Division prepared a report outlining ideas put forth and suggestions made. These details will help guide the strategic planning process as the Lewis College of Business moves forward. Thank you for your time and your support of our quest for continuous improvement.