

## 2015-2020 VCOBE Strategic Plan

### Preamble

The Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship (VCOBE) commenced operations in fall 2015. VCOBE is the result of the combination of two successful legacy business schools, and is committed to perpetuating advancement of the Rio Grande Valley by pursuing a mission, objectives, and strategies consistent with the guiding principles of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) adopted by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, and that reflect the faculty's and staff's commitment to continuous improvement in the areas of teaching, research, and service.<sup>1</sup>

This strategic plan begins with an outline of VCOBE's mission, served market and VCOBE's value proposition, identified through a SWOT analysis.<sup>2</sup> The mission, objectives, and strategies are the product of VCOBE's Strategic Planning Committee in on-going consultation with the leadership, faculty, staff, and students of the VCOBE, as well as key external stakeholders.

### VCOBE's Mission<sup>3</sup>

The Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship at UTRGV is strategically located at the "gateway" to the Americas and serves the educational needs of a largely bi-cultural and bi-lingual South Texas and northern Mexico region.

*Our mission is to be the agent of innovation, knowledge discovery, and economic development, in South Texas, Northern Mexico, and beyond, by offering a rigorous curriculum informed by experiential learning, high quality research, and community partnerships.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Guiding Principles of UTRGV as approved by the Board of Regents are presented in Appendix A

<sup>2</sup> VCOBE SWOT analysis is presented in Appendix B

<sup>3</sup> Approved by faculty vote October 9, 2015

The UTRGV Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship will accomplish this mission by:

1. developing university and external partnerships that drive curriculum and economic development;
2. operating with an entrepreneurial mindset in all we do;
3. offering a rigorous curriculum incorporating experiential learning opportunities;
4. conducting impactful, high quality research that contributes to knowledge creation; and
5. embracing socially responsible and sustainable business practices.

#### **VCOBE's served market**

The UTRGV Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship's served market is South Texas and northern Mexico, with an aspiration to expand service throughout Latin America. VCOBE aspires to be the preferred destination for quality business education in the South Texas region.

#### **VCOBE's value proposition**

The UTRGV Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship will:

1. create a learning environment tailored to meet the needs of the US-Mexico border region students that will inspire innovation and transformation of the region's economy;
2. provide an affordable, high quality, accredited education with multiple delivery methods to meet the needs of students;
3. focus on providing experiential learning imbedded throughout the curriculum through partnerships with business and other community partners, and with universities abroad;
4. engage faculty in high quality research that addresses regional issues, but is applicable to the world, and includes opportunities for student participation; and
5. create a faculty-driven environment that cherishes and encourages independent and critical thinking and the confidence and ability to identify and seize professional and life opportunities.

## VCOBE's strategic objectives

The UTRGV Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship will pursue the following objectives which fall into six major areas:

### Partnerships

1. establish and maintain an active Business Advisory Council (BAC);

First, we are working with the legacy (UTPA/UTB) BACs and identifying those who wish to continue to serve. We are working with the University Development staff, University Administration, and community business leaders to identify potential candidates for the council. Thus far formation meetings have been held, by-laws formulated.

In order to engage the BAC and maintain active participation, the BAC is identifying specific tasks in which they will participate. These activities include work in support of the Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC), the annual Business Leaders Lunch, and the VCOBE efforts to build its endowment. The BAC will meet at least twice a year and results of meetings will be communicated to VCOBE faculty each year.

2. establish and maintain partnerships that:

- inform curriculum,
- spur economic development,
- support research,
- provide opportunities for student success, and
- engage local, academic, and professional communities;

The VCOBE will seek out partnerships with various entities engaged in economic development. For instance, the VCOBE is a member of the Maquiladora Association of Matamoros, Mexico, and the Rio Grande Valley Partnership. We are working with Weslaco Economic Development Corporation to redevelop a major property in Weslaco to house the CIC as well as develop an incubator. We are working with McAllen Chamber of Commerce on economic forecasting programs for the region. We will seek out more such affiliations that will give VCOBE access to opportunities to achieve the goals outlined above. We will especially focus on identifying affiliation partners that will benefit from access to VCOBE resources, and in turn are prepared to partner with VCOBE in providing organizational access to data collection, provide student internships, and support the work of our centers.

VCOBE will develop collaborations with other universities in Europe, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. For example, we are working with the Autonomous University of Mexico and the Tecnológico de Monterrey.

3. establish an alumni network of at least 100 alum attending one event each year;

In fall 2016, the VCOBE hosted the Inaugural Business Leaders Lunch, which honored three major business leaders from the region. As a continuation of the UTB<sup>4</sup> School of Business's Annual Business Appreciation Breakfast this event will run annually. We will target the event toward alumni, in order that we may have a major event that includes a high profile keynote speaker and will receive significant press coverage.

We will also work with the University's Alumni Relations staff to support their efforts to build alumni relations across the region by participating targeted events. We will also establish meetings of PhD alum at major academic conferences.

### **Entrepreneurial mindset**

4. develop a Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC) that is recognized across the region as the nexus of entrepreneurial activity that will establish, maintain, and nurture five start-up organizations at launch in January 2017 and ten by the end of year 1;

We currently have a \$110,000 annual Economic Development Administration grant that funds basic CIC operations. We also receive ongoing support from the Rio Grande Valley Partnership and Weslaco Economic Development Corporation. In addition we have considerable "in kind" support from our faculty. In order to achieve this objective the following steps are anticipated:

- A. the University has agreed to give priority to a legislative request for economic development funding for the CIC. We are planning to request \$400,000 per year in revenue neutral funding;
  - B. the CIC is working with the City of Weslaco, Texas to develop a new space to house the CIC as well as provide 8,000 to 9,000 sq. ft. in incubator/accelerator space. The project is currently budgeted at \$3,200,000 and the target opening date is fall 2017;
  - C. the CIC has recently launched an affiliated angel investor network to aid in the funding of new ventures in the region. The network organization is applying for approval under IRC Section 501(c)6 as a tax exempt organization and will seek to expand to 40 to 50 certified investor members; and
  - D. the Department of International Business and Entrepreneurship is working closely with the CIC to integrate the CIC's activities into the curriculum for the new entrepreneurship program.
5. achieve within five years, one-third of college semester credit hours (SCHs) generated by programs that are career-directed, experiential and do not exist in fall 2015;

In order to achieve this objective, the VCOBE is, or will be pursuing the following strategies:

- A. developing a hospitality program that will be built around instructional facilities that will permit students opportunities for hands-on learning experiences;
- B. developing an entrepreneurship degree that will have a curriculum very much integrated into the operations of the CIC in order that students will receive extensive exposure to actual new venture creation and launch; and

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<sup>4</sup> University of Texas - Brownsville

- C. have created an Envisioning (Curriculum) committee charged with overseeing the process of reinvention in the coming years.

### **Experiential learning and student success**

- 6. offer a rigorous curriculum incorporating experiential learning opportunities within 60% of both upper level undergraduate and master's courses;

As mentioned above, the various new programs that VCOBE is currently developing have extensive experiential learning opportunities embedded in them. With regard to existing programs, each academic department will be charged with the responsibility of working with faculty in the various majors to develop experiential learning opportunities when and where practical. At the graduate level, the appropriate committee will be tasked with working to ensure this objective is achieved.

- 7. have 80% of full time undergraduate students graduate within three years from admission to the VCOBE;

UTRGV has embraced student success as one of the pillars of the new University. To that end, at the University level a number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve student success and graduation rates. Some of the new initiatives are as follows:

- A. newly launched CAMPUS tool (will enable identification of 'at-risk' students and various strategies for faculty and advisors re addressing identified issues);
- B. the VCOBE Honors college is being launched;
- C. an internship coordinator has been put in place and charged with the responsibility of seeking out internship opportunities;
- D. professional advising team for VCOBE is in place.

A key strategy that has been adopted at the college level is to materially enhance the advising, mentoring, and counseling our students receive by transferring from the faculty the responsibility for course selection and degree planning to the VCOBE's new Program Coordinators. The VCOBE's three Program Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that students admitted to the VCOBE are appropriately prepared for upper-level work, they take courses in proper sequence, have the prerequisites for the courses they wish to take, and are appropriately advised should they get into academic difficulties.

The VCOBE has also initiated tutoring services for its students. Tutoring is available for Quantitative Methods, Finance, Economics, and Accounting, and the intention is to broaden that offering.

- 8. develop a mechanism that tracks student placement for the purpose of continuous improvement;

VCOBE has established a [LinkedIn page](#), where students and faculty are encouraged to connect and interact. Effective November 2016, there are 210 LinkedIn connections and specific efforts are being made to ensure the continued development of this resource. The more this network can be developed, the more useful this social media platform will be as a tool to track student placement. In addition to LinkedIn, the VCOBE will seek to develop an online presence in other social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

In addition to college level efforts to track student placement, the VCOBE will work with the UTRGV Career Center and office of Alumni Relations to better track student placement.

9. within the next five years, develop and launch Entrepreneurship and Hospitality and Tourism Management undergraduate programs that are highly cross disciplinary, highly experiential in format, and highly market driven in content;

As described earlier, the VCOBE is currently in the process of advancing its new entrepreneurship program through the UTRGV and UT System program approval process. It is anticipated the program will launch in spring of 2017. As also described earlier, working closely with the Center for Innovation and Commercialization, as part of their coursework, the students will work directly with the Center's clients in developing their business concepts.

The VCOBE is in the process of developing the Hospitality and Tourism Management program. The program will require that students rotate through various hospitality work assignments at a hospitality business such as a restaurant or hotel as a part of one class. In addition, students in the program will be required to complete a hospitality-related internship of at least 700 hours. The VCOBE is currently working with an area developer to develop a high quality hotel in the Edinburg area in order to provide a teaching facility.

10. have a separately AACSB accredited School of Accountancy that awards a PhD;

We have identified the following steps in pursuit of this goal:

- A. enhance existing faculty research productivity by undertaking the following steps:
  - i. strengthen the VCOBE's criteria for PhD faculty status;
  - ii. provide more resources for research support, specifically by acquiring research databases and increasing travel funding;
  - iii. ensure that all accounting faculty who meet PhD faculty requirements teach 2/2 loads despite not having a PhD program to support at this time; and
  - iv. ensure that the new performance appraisal system rewards publications in high-quality (A\* and A) accounting journals.
- B. make hiring new, research-focused accounting faculty our top priority in soliciting faculty lines from the Provost's Office;
- C. make the addition of a PhD program in accounting our top priority in terms of seeking authorization of new graduate programs by first creating a steering committee;
- D. secure university funding to support at least five PhD students with assistantships, travel, etc.; and
- E. conduct a mock accreditation visit within the next two years.

11. increase the VCOBE undergraduate admission GPA requirements to 2.60 by Fall 201 and 2.75 by Fall of 2020;

VCOBE will explore raising the GPA requirement to 3.00 in 2019 to be implemented in 2022

12. increase the MBA admission requirement formula score to 1,100:  $[\text{GMAT score} + 200 \times \text{GPA}] \geq 1,100$ ;

This change will be implemented in academic year 2016-2017.

13. establish and promote a university-affiliated Honors College track in VCOBE that within five years, admits 40 students each year and offers honors sections of designated courses (see Appendix C);

The proposed VCOBE Honors College track will build on current course offerings with seven Honors sections: QUMT 2398, ACCT 2302, ECON 2302, MARK 3300, FINA 3380, BLAW 3337, and MGMT 4389. The fall 2017 inaugural cohort will comprise a target enrollment of 20 students at Brownsville campus and 20 students at Edinburg campus. This structure will enable the VCOBE Honors College track to comprise 21 credit hours, embedded within the curriculum of the student's respective program. Admission criteria for the VCOBE Honors College is set by UTRGV.

### **Knowledge creation and dissemination**

14. by 2021, 100% of Scholarly Academic faculty will have published within the past five years in "A" or better journals as listed in the ABDC journal list;
15. by 2021, at least 50% of Scholarly Academic faculty will have published within the past five years in "A\*" journals as listed in the ABDC journal list;

Goals 14 and 15 together address the research productivity of the faculty. We will employ essentially the same strategies described earlier regarding the enhancement of accounting faculty research productivity. Specifically, we will:

- A. more aggressively recruit "high potential" faculty candidates whose research records strongly suggest they will be able to produce at a high level. We will not only offer competitive salaries, but summer research stipends for their first three years (we recently began offering \$5,000 stipends);
- B. more effectively monitor faculty loads to ensure that those designated as PhD faculty remain on 2/2 teaching loads continuously;
- C. materially enhance the databases to which our faculty have access. VCOBE now subscribes to AuditAnalytics, Bank Regulatory, Blockholders Boardex, Computstat, CRSP, Dow Jones, Fama French & Liquidity Factors, Federal Research Bank, KLD, Penn World Tables, PHLX, Research Quotient, Sec Order Execution, Trace, Cusip, and WRDS. In addition to the databases provided, the UTRGV library also subscribes to Mergent Online and Lexis Nexis Academic Universe. Going forward, the PhD faculty and Associate Dean for Administration, Graduate Programs and Research will work with the faculty to identify high priority databases that need to be added;
- D. work to improve availability of faculty travel funds. We recently experienced an increase of about 80%, and the University has begun a program to offer additional travel support on a competitive basis. As we increase revenue from 'for profit' programs, then funding will be increased;
- E. make PhD student graduate assistants available on both the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses;
- F. strengthen the publication requirements faculty must meet in order to retain PhD faculty status;
- G. adopt the Australian Business Deans Council list as an indicator of quality journals;
- H. as part of our new performance appraisal system, more definitively reward publications in highly-ranked journals;

- I. generate VCOBE departmental seed money to be distributed to faculty for research on a competitive basis within the respective departments;

16. develop two Centers of Excellence within VCOBE that leverage faculty expertise and regional collaboration among the various private and public entities;

Continue efforts to make the Business and Tourism Research Center and the VCOBE Entrepreneurship program the focus of the University's research arm regarding business or economic related research in the Rio Grande Valley.

The Business and Tourism Research Center and associated expert faculty will become internationally recognized as conducting market research within the Rio Grande Valley that influences global theory and practice, especially in the area of tourism and healthcare hospitality.

The VCOBE's entrepreneurship program will gain national recognition through being named a finalist for the USASBE Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Program Award within the next four years and as a finalist for the USASBE Undergraduate National Model Program Award within eight years.

#### **Social responsibility**

17. incorporate sustainability, ethical, and social responsibility considerations within 100% of core curriculum;

In order to achieve this objective, we will pursue the following strategies:

- A. each academic department is charged with ensuring that all core courses offered by the department include sustainability and ethics as topics covered;
- B. the University's Office of Sustainability will be invited to share its expertise with the faculty and students; and
- C. a question will be added to the Student Course Evaluation Form in order to determine whether students report covering sustainability, social responsibility and ethics materials.

18. offer at least one service learning opportunity for students within each discipline each year;

- A. each department will solicit service learning proposals from the faculty each spring for the next academic year and will track projects. If no proposals are forthcoming, it will be the responsibility of the VCOBE Undergraduate Envisioning (curriculum) committee to identify possible courses in which a service learning project might be incorporated, and ask assigned faculty to consider including the project; and
- B. implement a college-wide service learning award.

#### **Resources**

19. to secure funding for two endowed professorships in each discipline within the next five years;

VCOBE has a senior development officer to assist in pursuing its development goals. Neither legacy institution's business schools had committed development staff. In addition, and as described earlier, the VCOBE has formed a new BAC, drawing largely from the membership of the legacy schools' councils. Part of the mission of that body is to assist the dean and development officer with

identifying potential benefactors with an interest in supporting the VCOBE. The dean will work with both the development officer and BAC members in acquiring the endowed positions the VCOBE targets. Recently, VCOBE announced a “naming” gift of \$15 million. The bulk of these funds will be used to fund endowed chairs of \$1 million as the funds are received over the next 6 years. The College will now focus on funding endowed professorships for each department/school within VCOBE. The VCOBE will also work with University Development to identify potential donors to support the Center for Innovation and Commercialization.”

20. The VCOBE will develop entrepreneurial initiatives that will generate at least \$300,000 each year for the college’s discretionary funding priorities.

The VCOBE will undertake two initiatives which we anticipate will in time generate significant discretionary funds:

The Spanish MBA Program. The VCOBE is currently restructuring the program and will be offered as an online MBA program targeted to Latin America. Earnings from this program will be captured by the VCOBE for discretionary purposes.

The Customs and Tariffs Certificate Program. The VCOBE has entered into an agreement with Charles Sturt University of Australia to offer an online graduate certificate program in customs and tariffs regulation and management. The program has been launched, and the first cohort is currently taking courses. Earnings from this program will be captured by the VCOBE for discretionary purposes.

The VCOBE is currently working with the Office of Global Engagement to develop a series of two-week summer short courses for students from abroad. The VCOBE anticipates charging tuitions that will allow it to capture approximately \$500 to \$600 per student attending.

**Table 1: VCOBE Strategic Action Plan**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1. establish and maintain an active Business Advisory Council (BAC);	BAC established 2015 with twice yearly meetings	Mark Kroll	Ongoing
2. establish and maintain partnerships that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. inform curriculum,</li> <li>b. spur economic development,</li> <li>c. support research,</li> <li>d. provide opportunities for student success, and</li> <li>e. engage local, academic, and professional communities;</li> </ul>	The planning committee with gather data semi-annually to update progress	VCOBE administrative team	Ongoing
3. establish an alumni network of at least 100 alum attending one event each year;	Attendance at Business Leaders Lunch	VCOBE administrative team	Ongoing
4. develop a Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC) that is recognized across the region as the nexus of entrepreneurial activity that will establish, maintain, and nurture five start-up organizations at launch in January 2017 and ten by the end of year 1;	Number of clients assisted; number of businesses launched	Center management and entrepreneurship activity	Next 2 years
5. achieve within five years, one-third of college semester credit hours (SCHs) generated by programs that are career-directed, experiential and do not exist in fall 2015;	Annual increase in SCHs from new programs	Associate Dean for undergraduate studies	Annually evaluated
6. offer a rigorous curriculum incorporating experiential learning opportunities within 60% of both upper level undergraduate and master's courses;	Annual increase in courses offering experiential learning	Associate Dean for undergraduate studies	Annually evaluated
7. have 80% of full time undergraduate students graduate within three years from admission to the VCOBE;	Annually track 3-year graduation rates	Program coordinates and Admin team	Next 5 years

8. develop a mechanism that tracks student placement for the purpose of continuous improvement;	Have mechanisms in place	Career services	Next 3 years
9. within the next five years, develop and launch Entrepreneurship and Hospitality and Tourism Management undergraduate programs that are highly cross disciplinary, highly experiential in format, and highly market driven in content;	Entrepreneurship launch by 2017; hospitality program launch by 2018	Entrepreneurship: faculty and department chairs; Hospitality: Mark Kroll and Penny Simpson	Next 2-3 years
10. have a separately AACSB accredited School of Accountancy that awards a PhD;	Increasing number of faculty who meet PhD faculty criteria	Director of School of Accountancy and Dean	Annual progress update over next 5 years
11. increase the VCOBE undergraduate admission GPA requirements to 2.60 by Fall 2018 and 2.75 by Fall of 2020;			
12. increase the MBA admission requirement formula score to 1,100: $[GMAT \text{ score} + 200 \times GPA \text{ (calculated from last 60 hours)}] \geq 1,100$ ;	Actual implementation	Associate Dean for undergraduate studies	2016-2017
13. establish and promote a university-affiliated Honors College track in VCOBE that, within five years, admits 40 students each year and offers honors sections of all advanced business core courses	Annual increase in student participation 5 year target of 40 students	Associate Dean for undergraduate studies	Annually toward 5-year goal
14. by 2021, 100% of Scholarly Academic faculty will have published within the past five years in "A" or better journals as listed in the ABDC journal list; 15. by 2021, at least 50% of Scholarly Academic faculty will have published within the past five years in "A*" journals as listed in the ABDC journal list;	Annual performance appraisals of faculty	Faculty review committees, Department chairs, Dean	Annually toward 2021

16. develop two Centers of Excellence within VCOBE that leverage faculty expertise and regional collaboration among the various private and public entities;	Annual review of center development	Center directors	Annually over the next 5 years
17. incorporate sustainability, ethical, and social responsibility considerations within 100% of core curriculum;	Annual review of syllabi	Envisioning committee, Department chairs, Dean	Next 2 years
18. offer at least one service learning opportunity for students within each discipline each year;	Annual report by departments	Department chairs, Associate Dean	Next 2 years
19. to secure funding for two endowed professorships in each discipline within the next five years;	Annual endowment report	Development officer, Dean	Annually over next 5 years
20. The VCOBE will develop entrepreneurial initiatives that will generate at least \$300,000 each year for the college's discretionary funding priorities	Actual student enrollment statistics	Program coordinators	Annually over the next 5 years

# Appendix A

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## **UTRGV Guiding Principles**

The new University of Texas in the Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) will provide an outstanding education to the students of South Texas, Texas, the United States and the world. This education will be of the highest quality; it will be affordable, accessible and innovative. The new university will transform Texas and the nation by becoming a leader in student success, teaching, research and healthcare.

### **Goals and Guiding Principles**

- Fully integrate next generation technology and customized learning to increase affordability and maximize student success.
- Promote access to postsecondary education to a diverse student body to become one of the largest and most successful Hispanic-serving institutions in the U.S.A.
- Employ the highest quality faculty members and staff who pursue global excellence in teaching, research, healthcare and service.
- Streamline academic and administrative programs and re-design processes to increase productivity and promote a student- and service-centered mode of operation.
- Promote arts and humanities programs to produce state, national and world leaders who are bi-cultural, bi-lingual, and bi-literate.
- Develop programmatic strength in the areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health.
- Develop a Medical School of the first class, with outstanding undergraduate and graduate medical education, public health, health professional degrees and clinical research, to improve the health of the community.
- Become a global leader in higher education, health education, bio-medical research, emerging technology and preparing students to be lifelong learners.
- Pursue applied and translational research to address critical local, state, national, and global needs.
- Build on the excellent economic activity and strength of the State of Texas and benefit from the State's leadership in the world.
- Provide a leadership role in fostering economic and community partnerships to help solve local, state, national, and global problems.

- Promote innovation and knowledge discovery with business and industry that will lead to job growth and improvements in the quality of the region's workforce.
- Build a hub for inventions and intellectual property that will lead to economic and community prosperity and an improved quality of life for the region, the State, the nation and our world.
- Serve as a "Gateway to the Americas" by cultivating partnerships with global leaders in education, health, research and other strategic, high-growth industries.
- Leverage the size, strength, and excellence of the University of Texas System and its fifteen outstanding institutions to shorten the time it takes to achieve these goals.

# Appendix B

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## VCOBE SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Consistent high-ranking as a prominent Hispanic-serving College in terms of the number of undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded, which helps to gain supporters seeking to enhance Hispanic success
- Tuition and overall cost of attendance has been very affordable compared to other higher education institutions both within and outside of the state
- VCOBE's geographic location has a strategic importance as it serves as "gateway to Americas" [using Regents and Chancellor's terminology]. Such a strategic location allows VCOBE to train a bi-cultural and bi-literate workforce and supports the local, state and national economy
- Currently, both colleges (UTPA & UTB) have AACSB accreditation. Only a very small percentage of world's business schools have that designation. VCOBE is building a strong foundation for re-accreditation
- VCOBE benefits from its affiliation from the University of Texas System and its national and international recognition as one of the excellent educational systems in the nation
- VCOBE has a number of faculty who are nationally and internationally known in research issues relevant to the region

### Weaknesses

- Budget currently not sufficient to support competitive faculty salaries, research, and development
- Poor capital investments (in buildings and assets) and infrastructure
- Weak alumni network; poor alumni outreach efforts, and little knowledge of placements
- Relatively weak relationship with the region's business community
- Low impact student placements and career opportunities
- Very low brand recognition at the state, regional and national levels

- Faculty research productivity should be stronger relative to other PhD granting institutions
- Thin diversity when it comes to student population
- Poor inflow of resources from external donors and endowments (such as endowed positions)
- Student retention and graduation needs to be improved
- No externally-recognized centers of excellence
- We are not currently knowledgeable of, or responsive to the market
- Continued violence in northern Mexico which diminishes collaboration opportunities
- Low staff salaries

### Opportunities

- Strengthen the business, community and non-profit engagement and relationships
- UTRGV access to PUF funds may lead to more capital projects and upgrades
- The goal and emphasis on emerging research university status could mean more program development in graduate education (more PhD and masters level programs)
- More research emphasis helps attract and retain high-caliber faculty
- Opportunity to develop areas of excellence in VCOBE (e.g. Tourism and Hospitality, Logistics & IB, Entrepreneurial Eco-System)
- More opportunity to recruit prospective students in Central and South America, through strategies such as courses in Spanish
- High population growth in the RGV, which is a positive trend in terms of recruitment and enrollment
- Develop the capacity to materially enhance Hispanic student retention and graduation, and career success
- Build or develop collaborative research relationships with other domestic and international b-schools, especially incorporating issues relevant to our region
- Improve our brand by collaborating with other colleges, such as the medical school, and the College of Engineering

### Threats

- Possibility of reduced state funding
- Competition from other (public and for-profit) colleges and universities
- Low service orientation
- STEM program competition for students

# Appendix C

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## VCOBE Honors College Track

The current draft proposal for an honors track within VCOBE includes the following:

9 credits of lower-division honors courses – VCOBE students will meet this requirement by taking honors sections of courses from the Business Foundations sequence.

3 credits of honors practicum – A required departmental internship or service-learning activity may be substituted with the addition of an honors component

9 credits of upper-division honors courses – Upper-division requirements in general will be met by taking honors sections of upper-division courses from the Advanced Business Core.

Students also have the option of doing an honors thesis, which includes a total of 4 credits (HONR 3187 for 1 credit and HONR 4387 for 3 credits). For students in the VCOBE honors track, a required program experience (MGMT 4389) may be substituted with the addition of an honors component. These honors components can be standardized to some extent so that the additional workload (for both students and faculty) is consistent.