April 22, 2009

Richard S. Lytle
Dean
College of Business Administration
Box 29303
Abilene Christian University
ACU Box 29303
Abilene Texas 79699-9301

Dear Dean Lytle:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the peer review team recommendation to extend maintenance of accreditation for the undergraduate and master’s degree programs in business¹ offered by your School is concurred with by the Maintenance of Accreditation Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors. Congratulations to you, the faculty, the students, the staff, and all supporters of the business programs.

One purpose of peer review is to stimulate further continuous improvement of quality programs. As noted in the team report, your School is to be commended on the following strengths and effective practices:

1. The PRT was impressed with the leadership provided by Dean Lytle, an energetic and visionary leader, who has the support of the faculty, advisory boards, and is well-liked and respected by the students.

2. The faculty is committed to the educational and Christian missions of the COBA and ACU, and this commitment is clearly recognized by the students.

3. The ACU-COBA has a mature assurance of learning process in place and operating. Program goals are assessed using multiple direct measures such as ETS’s major field test and course embedded assessment. The use of multiple assessment instruments adds credibility and insight to the processes. Five year outcomes are within the targets set. The documentation is thorough and reflects a culture of improvement. The learning assurance committee meets regularly, and minutes of meetings document changes to curriculum to remedy deficiencies. Indirect measures include the alumni survey, current student survey, employer survey, and supervisor assessment of interns are used to compare results and generate a more complete picture.

4. ACU-COBA uses ETS’s MAPP test of critical thinking, reading, writing, and math. The performance on this assessment exceeds expectation. The ACU-COBA admissions standards were raised to improve the academic standing of the entering class thus improving the outputs of the program.

5. ACU-COBA utilizes external boards very effectively in the continuous improvement process. Advisory board members are engaged and active in the life of the college. Visiting teams made up of academics,

¹ See Attachment A: Scope of Accreditation
² See Attachment B: Timeline
practitioners, and employers regularly visit the campus to assess progress toward meeting strategic goals and to identify areas of improvement.

Additionally, in the interest of continuous improvement, the development of annual maintenance reports provides your school an ongoing opportunity to discuss progress on and updates to the action items within your school’s strategic plan. These annual progress updates are to be retained at your school until 60 days prior to your next on-site review. As identified within the peer review team report, the following items are suggested for incorporation into your ongoing strategic planning initiatives:

1. The PRT commends ACU-COBA on an informative and detailed set of documentation to support the Maintenance Review. Specifically, the PRT found the first-year annual maintenance report, completed the year after initial accreditation, and the Fifth Year Maintenance Report to be generally well-designed and appropriate to the task; however, the reports could more clearly articulate alignment the continuous improvement outcomes as they relate to the strategic plan and action items identified as strategic goals and objectives. The school’s standards for both AQ and PQ faculty status are lacking in sufficient guidance related to both the type and intensity/frequency (i.e., quantity of ICS) of maintenance activities. Regarding the maintenance of AQ status, the school should clarify the ambiguity in Figure 7 in the Fifth Year Maintenance Report regarding the intended differences between “peer-reviewed intellectual contributions” and “peer-reviewed published contribution[s]” The PRT needed significant clarification and guidance as to the interpretation and implementation of these definitions. More guidance should be given in this area. Additionally, given the stated mission and vision of ACU-COBA, and given the resources allocated to scholarship and the production of ICS, the stated maintenance activities required to maintain AQ status appear to be lower than many other peer schools with similar research efforts.

2. With respect to the initial assignment of PQ status in Figure 7, more guidance should be provided regarding the nature and significance of “professional experience” needed to be assigned as PQ. The current policy makes no distinction between the possible scope and intensity of managerial and functional responsibility potentially found across candidates for PQ faculty positions. Additionally, the maintenance activities listed to maintain PQ status make no mention of the intensity or frequency of such activities necessary over a 5-year period needed to maintain PQ status. The definition of sufficient professional experience needed to be deployed as a PQ faculty member should be defined in such a way as to set a sufficiently high standard along with guidance be added to address the frequency and intensity of maintenance activities to maintain PQ status.

3. Several ACU-COBA faculty members appear to be misclassified given the standards for AQ or PQ maintenance articulated in the policy documents of ACU-COBA. In future reviews, accuracy and reliability of the information presented to AACSB must be addressed.

4. Given current faculty deployment and qualifications, two functional areas do not meet the minimum standards for AQ coverage as articulated in the accreditation standards. Specifically, marketing (major) has only 44% AQ coverage (<50%) using a “faculty resources equivalency” measure of deployment. The administration has articulated to the PRT strategies that might yield sufficient AQ coverage in the medium- to long-run, but short-term strategies are needed to address this deficiency. Additionally, the AQ coverage in Economics (non-major) is adequate but marginal.

Your school has achieved accreditation for six additional years. The next on-site maintenance review occurs in the fifth year, 2013-14. A timeline specific to your visit year is attached. Please refer to the Maintenance of Accreditation Handbook for more information regarding the processes for maintenance of accreditation. The
handbook is evolving and will be updated frequently to provide the most current process improvements. Please monitor the website to make certain that you have the most current version.

Again, congratulations from the Accreditation Council and AACSB International - The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Thank you for participating in the maintenance of accreditation process and for providing valuable feedback to develop a more meaningful and beneficial review.

Sincerely,

Richard Cosier, Chair
Board of Directors

cc:    Peer Review Team
      Philip Rice, Team Chair
      William Rupp, Business Member
      Beck Taylor, Business Member
      Caryn Beck-Dudley, Chair, Maintenance of Accreditation Committee
      Avijit Ghosh, MAC Liaison
      Dan Worrell, MAC Reader
SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION
Maintenance of Accreditation March 2009

Name of Institution:
Abilene Christian University

Name of Business Academic Unit:
College of Business Administration

List of Degree Programs Reviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Degree Program</th>
<th>Major(s), Concentration(s), Area(s) of Emphasis</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Business Administration</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Accountancy</td>
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<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>11-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the Business School Questionnaire for prior academic year</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1 - Submit Maintenance Review Application with signed cover letter requesting maintenance review and preferred visit dates.</td>
<td>Accreditation Coordinating Committee rules on exclusions and the scope of the accreditation visit</td>
<td>Submit List of Degree Programs including Catalogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit request for exclusion of degree programs including justification for the request</td>
<td>Work with AACSB to set the visit date</td>
<td>Submit List of Comparison Groups (Peer, Competitive, and Aspirant)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Previous four items to be submitted together.*