

## **Assessment of Non-Academic Outcomes (Fall 2003 and Spring 2004)**

**Unit: Center for NAFTA Studies                      Date: 25 January, 2004**

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**I. Mission:** The Center's mission consists of several parts as follows:

- § To develop student and faculty competencies in international trade and commerce with special emphasis on NAFTA;
- § To research, explore, and document the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement on investment, on trade and commerce decisions, and on activities of governments and businesses in the Dallas-Fort Worth region;
- § To facilitate exporting activities of the regional business organizations.

To assure that the Center met the mission of the University, faculty and staff undertook an intensive study of the need for such a Center. The COBA Board of Advisors recommended establishment of a special advisory group made up of experts from the international business and government communities to examine the feasibility for COBA to develop a focused international effort. This special group examined the role that COBA should play in bringing international educational opportunities to its students and to business and government organizations in this region. It concluded that the international focus for UNT's College of Business Administration should be the development of a wide-ranging expertise on NAFTA and its impact on the three signatories (Canada, México, and the United States) with special reference to the needs of the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

The faculty-led International Committee considered the appropriateness of a NAFTA focus for the College. Departmental-based Curriculum and Academic Policy Committees agreed that NAFTA is an appropriate focus for some of our curriculum development efforts.

Students provided input into the decision process. They encouraged the establishment of the Center for NAFTA Studies and inclusion of students in its activities and programs. Indeed, the overall thrust of the initiative is to tie student needs and interests to those of the international business community and of the faculty through curriculum reform.

A direct benefit to both faculty and students is the integrative nature of the program we are developing. Traditional business education in the United States is organized around a series of academic departments devoted to a single discipline. UNT is typical. We have five departments around which the curriculum is developed. These five silos lead to a fractured learning experience unless individual silos are knitted into an integrated educational experience. We believe that the NAFTA theme developed throughout the curriculum can serve the purpose of knitting the educational pieces into one fabric.

Out of the dialogue with our various stakeholders, a variety of needs were identified and expectations developed for the Center for NAFTA Studies. The establishment of a Center for NAFTA Studies makes a substantial contribution to the international activities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region and at the University.

Advisory groups also encouraged the COBA to be alert to opportunities to extend the Center's work to Central and Latin America. This will become increasingly important as the NAFTA trade corridor expands to include countries in these other areas.

Our discussions resulted in the identification of a number of different areas consistent with the mission of the University in which COBA could make important contributions to this region's international business activities. These activities were grouped into four areas consistent with the university's mission: (1) business community outreach and executive development, (2) faculty programs and development, (3) research programs and development, and (4) student programs and development.

The Center's mission is a direct outcome of the needs assessment process described above and of a critical review within the university's senior administration. The administrative review process focused on (1) whether or not the mission and objectives of the proposed Center were consistent with those of the university as a whole and (2) competencies of individuals who would execute the activities of the Center. The Council of Deans, each senior Vice President, the President, and the Chancellor of the University approved and encouraged the College of Business Administration to establish the Center.

**II. Previous Evaluations of the Unit:** The newly-formed Center for NAFTA Studies received an initial two-year Business in International Education (BIE) grant from the Department of Education. The grant, for a two-year total of \$158,000, began July 1, 2003. This is the first year of an assessment under the grant.

**III. Statement of Expected Outcomes:** The BIE grant will help finance Center outcomes designed to meet the needs students. These outcomes will enable the Center for NAFTA Studies to make substantial progress toward accomplishing its mission over an implementation period of two years beginning July 1, 2003. They include:

1. **Faculty and Student Development Programs and Exchanges.** The activities within this outcome area include curriculum development to incorporate NAFTA issues in selected courses and programs; student education and training in an international context with specific emphasis on NAFTA; faculty development programs in international business with specific emphasis on NAFTA issues; and student and faculty study abroad and exchange programs with Mexican universities. The Center is now negotiating with a Mexican University to take UNT faculty for an extended visit to learn from Mexican scholars the benefits and costs of NAFTA to both México and the United States. The Center has played a major role in developing courses to offer to UNT students on Mexican campuses. Two courses are scheduled for May, 2004. The Center has negotiated an agreement (for exchanging faculty and students) between UNT and the Universidad de

Colima in México. The agreement will be signed in February, 2004, on each campus. impact of this outcome on student learning and development is obvious.

2. **International Business and Trade Organizations Outreach.** Activities within this program area focus on facilitating exports, marketing and logistics, and financing. This includes working with the Dallas and Fort Worth Chambers of Commerce and area businesses and governments on projects of mutual benefit; developing a research program that focuses on specific issues that directly affect trilateral trade; developing educational modules for inclusion in the business curriculum; and serving as a catalyst to spur critical thinking about innovation and investment in exporting. A NAFTA River of Trade Program held in October of 2003 fulfilled this part of the Center's mission. Student learning and development are benefited as a result of links among academic institutions, world trade and business groups, state departments of commerce, and course enrichment form NAFTA modules presented in the classroom. Moreover, students benefited from attending the NAFTA River of Trade Program.
3. **Technology Transfer and Innovation.** This strategy calls for the Center to translate the knowledge created through research and education into innovative ideas and methods that create wealth and build local and regional infrastructures. This strategy also calls for developing a sense of awareness and commitment on the part of students and faculty to the roles of business structure and organization in this transfer. In December, 2003, and January, 2004, the Center was instrumental in arranging for three COBA faculty members to visit a Mexican university to assist faculty there and local government agencies in developing information technology and academic programs. Faculty scheduled to visit a Mexican university to learn about NAFTA will benefit from the exchange of ideas and technology with their Mexican mentors. This expected outcome will benefit students by introducing different technological perspectives into the classroom and by introducing UNT students to the Mexican way of doing business.

**IV. Measuring Expected Outcomes:** The Center measures the extent to which outcomes have been achieved in the following ways:

- A pragmatic measure based on the fulfillment of specific goals specified in the BIE Award. Two first-year (1 July 2003-30 June 2004) goals were specified in the Grant proposal:
  - Plan and present a business outreach program emphasizing NAFTA. The Center planned and presented the NAFTA River of Trade program in October. Thus, based on the pragmatic measure, this outcome was successful.
  - Provide for initiation of NAFTA modules in business courses by rewarding faculty with a task fee for developing modules and by taking faculty to a Mexican university for a mentoring program with the faculty at that university. Based on the practical measure, this outcome is not yet completed successfully. However, faculty have been identified and negotiations are underway to take faculty to the Monterrey campus of Tec de Monterrey (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey) during March, 2004.
- Administrative evaluation of the Center by the Administrative staff of the college of Business Administration. The Dean's office will assess the contributions and progress of the Center as part of the office's usual evaluation process. This method is used annually.
- BIE evaluation of the Center's successful outcomes is twofold:

- Ⓔ Renewal of the second half of the two-year BIE Grant. The Center must complete a supplemental Grant application requesting continuation of the Grant. Approval by the DOE will be documented evidence that the Center is fulfilling its targeted outcomes. Used annually.
- Ⓕ Evaluation by a professional outside evaluator. A BIE Grant requires an objective, arms-length evaluation by an expert with results shared with administration and the DOE. This extensive evaluation consists of a visit by the evaluator and extensive investigation on the campus. This evaluation of the Center was carried out in January, 2004. The written report is forthcoming and will become a part of the continuation proposal for the second year of the Grant. Used annually.

**V. Use of Assessment Results:** Results of the assessment will be transparent. All results will be available to the staff of the Center, and discussion held regarding implementing suggestions. Extent of each outcome's success will be related to the mission of the Center (page 1 above) and to student learning and development.

**VI. Changes Made Based on Assessment Results:** The newly formed Center received the BIE Grant in July, 2003. Thus, the assessment results will be implemented starting in July, 2004, the second year of the Grant. We look forward to seeing and implementing changes based on the assessment.

**Signature of Person Completing the Form:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Unit Head after Reviewing the Form:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_