After a year of research and analysis the College of Business presented the findings for Strategic Plan 2016 (SP 2016) to David Soltz, president of Bloomsburg University. According to Michael Tidwell, dean of the COB, SP 2016 is a major departure from the previous strategic plan, which led to AACSB accreditation.

“With AACSB accreditation established in 2004, and reaffirmed in 2009, the Strategic Planning Committee’s new task was to design a forward thinking plan that delivered short term results while establishing long-term vision.” Tidwell says, “the College seeks to be recognized as a leader among regional business schools for our ability to prepare students whose knowledge, skills, and abilities are valued by our stakeholders. This can only be achieved by delivering the highest quality education in our region.”

With this vision in mind the Strategic Planning Committee conducted research, collected data and gathered input from faculty, staff, university administration and staff, students and alumni, and employers and advisory board members. Using the data, the committee created a strategy to build three Centers of Excellence that will differentiate and shape the next growth phase for the College. These Centers of Excellence include, accounting, professional development, and international programming.

The Centers of Excellence will deliver value to students and other stakeholders by focusing the School’s time and resources in deliberate ways. For example, Professional Development was designated as a Center of Excellence because all stakeholders believed it was important to deliver a comprehensive student-centered educational experience designed to build the personal and professional capacities necessary for career success. Recently endowed by a $1.67 million gift from Terry and JoAnn Zeigler, the Professional Development Program will complement the rigorous academic experience delivered by College of Business faculty.

The Bloomsburg University Accounting Program was designated as a Center of Excellence because of its ability to respond to business needs by producing graduates that exceed stakeholder expectations. The program boasts almost 100% job placement and one of the highest CPA pass rates in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. As one of the anchor programs in the College of Business.

Dr. Richard “Dick” Baker, Chair, Department of Accounting, retired this summer. Dick earned his BS in Accounting (’73) and MBA (’77) from Bloomsburg University, prior to serving as a BU accounting faculty member for almost 25 years. As chair, Dick’s one overriding mission for the university’s accounting program was to ensure that every student who received an accounting degree from Bloomsburg University was prepared to succeed in the workplace.

Dr. Minu Afsa, Professor or Management, retired in July 2011. A native of Bangladesh, Minu received his doctorate in Industrial Management in the USSR. While he made his mark in various corners of the College of Business, Minu’s lasting contribution was the establishment of international faculty and student exchange partnerships with universities in Asia, Europe, Australia, and Africa. Dr. Afsa was widely published in organizational behavior, international business, and strategy.
A Conversation with Dr. Laura Davis

Q: What types of research projects do you have in the pipeline?
A: I work on projects that I find interesting to me or helpful to the students – ideally, both. For example, the articles I have written with Victoria Geyfman explore women’s access to and success in business professions. This is interesting to me as a teacher of employment discrimination and hopefully the results will help me give good direction to our female students. Currently I am working on two projects. One is using the litigation pending against Facebook and its founder as a way to teach many of the topics covered in Law and the Legal Environment. The other is sexual harassment of teenage workers and the underreporting of the problem. I am not someone who mines the same data set – I need to feel “the burn” about my topic.

Q: Can you tell the readers about one of your latest publications?
A: This year my work on three different comprehensive projects has come to fruition.

• “You Can’t Ask That! Unmasking the Myths About ‘Illegal’ Preemployment Interview Questions” is an article exploring how employers should frame interview questions to avoid claims of discrimination. It appears in the ALSB Journal of Employment and Labor Law.

• “Faculty Selling Desk Copies: The Textbook Industry, the Law and the Ethics” was coauthored with Mark Usry and is forthcoming in the Journal of Academic Ethics. The article examines the disturbing practice and its future in light of e-books.

• “Gender Inequality in Undergraduate Business Schools: The Glass Door Effects” was coauthored with Victoria Geyfman and is forthcoming in the NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education. It explores the decline of female student enrollment in PASSHE Business Schools and the lack of growth of the number of female faculty.

Q: How do you apply your research in the classroom?
A: I think I can better answer this question: How does your research benefit your classes? My work informs me as a lawyer and legal scholar. The more informed I am both about legal theory and trends, the more relevant the content of my courses becomes. Regardless of the topic of the research project I am currently devoted to, I am reading and thinking and learning about developments in the law. Inevitably, I carry that information into the classroom with me; along with my textbook.

Q: What are the implications of your research for society?
A: Probably the work on gender in business has the most societal impact. How can we say gender discrimination is a thing of the past when so few females are in management positions and the number of young women entering Business Schools is decreasing?

Strategic Plan continued...

Business, new resources will be funneled into the program to strengthen and elevate its reputation.

Still in its infancy, the International Business Program helps students develop a global perspective and the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the ‘world’ of business. “Business is now global and it’s important that our students recognize that this is not a trend” says Tidwell. Today’s graduates will work with colleagues from around the world, both physically and virtually. More importantly, their firms will experience competition from businesses on virtually every continent. It is vital for every business graduate to be well-equipped for this reality. As a result, the College will actively recruit and develop personnel to support international program priorities, develop financial resources to support international programming, and weave international concepts into the fiber of the every College program.

Tidwell praises the Committee, indicating that “it involved all stakeholders, considered a whole range of wants and needs, and realistically developed a list of the most important priorities all the while keeping the vision and mission of the College in focus. The implementation of this plan will differentiate the College and provide a path for future success.”