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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BUSINESS SCHOOL MAKES CHANGES TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR DEMANDS OF
21ST CENTURY WORKPLACE

CHARLESTON -- Competing in the high tech environment of an increasingly global marketplace requires specialists who can think broadly and respond quickly to changing circumstances.

How to prepare Eastern students for that environment was the underlying focus of a comprehensive, two-year study of Eastern's School of Business in the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences.

The study concluded that Eastern's various business offerings were strong while recommending that the School of Business be reorganized to operate without academic/administrative units, leading to greater emphasis on the "business school concept," integration of business programs, efficiency of processes, and continuous improvement.

The degree programs and the courses offered by the four former departments in the School of Business have been preserved under the new structure.

"We have found that students have more interest in their majors and their professors than in

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the departments with which the programs and faculty are affiliated, so we don't anticipate them to be greatly affected by the restructuring," Ivarie said.

He added, "It is no longer adequate to be educated and high skilled in one area, accountancy, for example, and not understand the concept of marketing or information systems management. Everyone in today's business organization, from top executives on down, are realizing that the success of their activities relies on the support from coordination with other units."

The School of Business has a substantive core curriculum reflecting a body of knowledge common to all business disciplines. The various business majors provide opportunities for specialized study in business disciplines that have their foundation in the functional areas.

"In other words, students still graduate from the college with a degree in accountancy, finance, administrative information systems, computer management, management, or marketing," Ivarie said. "But they leave here with an increased understanding of skills and knowledge that prepares them for a marketplace that increasingly expects professionals with cross functional perspectives."

Other goals of the reorganization are to emphasize the "business school" concept that is consistent with an enduring characteristic of business education in U.S. colleges and universities. More recently, accreditation standards have encouraged core curriculums that are cross functional. Traditional school organizational structures such as Eastern's are not well suited to support that activity, Ivarie said.

The School of Business concept, according to the study, tends to result in a broader sense of community, more synergy, increased teaming among faculty and increased responsiveness to

opportunities and issues.

More tangible benefits include savings realized by the elimination of department chair positions, fewer committees, fewer reports, consolidation of planning, assessment and program review functions, consolidated budgets and improved coordination of student services such as recruiting, admissions, advisement and placement. Actual financial savings will be cumulative, allowing the school to redirect funds to program priorities, Ivarie said.

The newly reorganized School of Business is administered by Chair Frank Clark, Associate Chair Yunus Kathawala and Acting Director of Administration Toni Smith -- with existing support staff continuing to provide service to the academic and administrative functions. Faculty in each of the self-directed discipline units are responsible for programmatic initiatives, research, professional development and other activities. "The reorganization empowers faculty members to work individually and collectively to do their best," Ivarie said.