

University of Memphis Fogelman College of Business and Economics secures accreditation

- By James Dowd
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Thanks largely to the efforts of faculty members (from left) Rajiv Grover, Tom Miller, Carolyn Callahan, Lloyd Brooks and Jasbir Dhaliwal, the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at the University of Memphis has attained accreditation from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business without conditions.

What a difference a decade makes.

Ten years ago, the [Fogelman College of Business and Economics](#) at the University of Memphis received notice that its accreditation was in jeopardy. But after years of vigorous restructuring and rebuilding, the school is earning solid marks for steering its program in the right direction.

Dr. Rajiv Grover, dean of the Fogelman College, received official word Friday of the school's successful bid from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. The school of accountancy also earned accreditation.

"We got a clean bill of health and a lot of positive comments about our business school. There were no conditions," Grover said. "The credit goes to our faculty, who embraced these initiatives, and the tremendous support from the Memphis business community. They've made an enormous difference in the lives of our students."

The news of the school's success reverberated among boosters, including George Johnson of BJB Administrative Services, who last November was named one of the university's outstanding alumni.

"Fogelman College is an important part of this community, and it's gratifying to know that any accreditation issues have been put to rest," Johnson said. "The holistic approach that Dr. Grover and his faculty are taking toward education is generating positive attention."

Bill Watkins, of CPA firm Watkins Uiberall, agreed.

"This shows how far the University of Memphis has come, from previous dean John Pepin through the work of Rajiv Grover today, and the school's remarkable outreach to the community," Watkins said. "The business college is at an entirely different level from 10 years ago. Every major city in the world has a major university and we're making great strides at the University of Memphis with innovative programs in the business and accounting schools."

Friday's news was light years away from 2001, Watkins said, when the college was put on notice that it was in danger of losing its accreditation for, among other things, offering dozens of classes taught by adjunct faculty at off-campus locations.

At the time, only about one-third of the school's undergraduate courses were taught by faculty holding doctorates in their fields, and there were concerns about outdated curriculum content and low admission standards.

All that has changed.

After the school was put on notice, former dean John Pepin and Fogelman leaders revamped the school's mission, revised its programs and added faculty. Before 18 months had passed the college was re-accredited, a full year ahead of schedule.

Grover, who became dean on Aug. 1, 2007, following Pepin's retirement, has continued that upward trajectory. And he's determined to present another impressive accreditation bid when the college comes under review again in five years.

The Fogelman process impressed Dr. H. Fenwick Huss, accreditation team member and dean of the J. Mack Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University.

Among the school's strengths, Huss said, "The college enjoys strong support from the business community, and recent innovations including the holistic development of students through the 'Fogelman Promise Initiative' are highly valued by the business community." The school has made significant improvement in advising students, Huss said, but needs its own placement office to serve students and alumni.

And that's in the works, Grover said. Under his direction, the college has implemented a number of initiatives, including new degree programs such as the Customer-Driven MBA, Entrepreneurship MBA and International MBA that have attracted diverse applicants from across the globe.

"Strong schools reviewed us and we received critical feedback and affirmation that we're on the right track," said Carolyn Callahan, director of the School of Accountancy. "There's a lot of excitement here these days, and it's wonderful to be part of this program that's technology-driven and preparing students to succeed in a global marketplace."

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