Students should complete the essay described below. The essay is due in the individual's Assignments Folder as indicated in the Course Guide/Schedule.

The essay should demonstrate a student's ability to integrate and synthesize course concepts with selected readings to communicate his/her understanding of financial management concepts their application in organizations. The essay should also demonstrate a student's ability to communicate as a manager. This includes proper writing style, organization, grammar, and spelling, as well as integration of course-related material. The writing style must follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition. Citations for online sources should include the online address (URL) and access date as well as the citation for the specific reference.

Do not use abstracts, use full-text articles. Publications that may be relevant for the topics listed below include: Strategic Finance, The Journal of Business Finance and Accounting, CFO Magazine, Nonprofit World, Harvard Business Review, or other accounting and financial journals.

**The paper should:**

Be based on your reading and research relevant to the topic.

Be 5 to 6 double-spaced pages, plus appendices, exhibits, and references.

Include a one-page Executive Summary immediately following the title page that includes a statement of the major issue(s) and your conclusions and specific recommendations. The content of an Executive Summary is similar to an abstract.

Properly cite reference sources: these may include course material, information from magazines, journals, and online sources. All reference sources must have a publication date within the last fifteen years. Students who wish to use an older source publication should contact the instructor with the request and reason.

**Essay Topics/Individual Research Paper: Select one of the following topics**

1. **Ratio and Financial Statement Analysis**

Your essay should critically analyze the benefits and limitations of ratio analysis, explaining what factors impact the meaningfulness of such measures and what new practices or theories may be emerging regarding the application of ratio and financial statement analysis. Emphasize practical applications and real-world use of ratios synthesizing your readings in published research or survey articles.

**2. Challenges faced by Financial Managers in a Changing Economic Environment**

Your essay should critically asses the challenges faced by financial managers due to changes in the macroeconomic environment and how these impact businesses operations. Emphasize how there are consequences related to changes in strategies and priorities and in the way the departments adjust.

**3. Financial Management Practices and Their Impact on Organizational Performance:**

Your essay should critically asses the relationship between organizational performance and financial management practices. These include capital structure decision, investment appraisal techniques, dividend policy, working capital management and financial performance assessment.