

rates change. For example, if long-term mortgage interest rates decline sharply, mortgage-backed securities in the securities portfolio may prepay significantly earlier than anticipated, which could reduce earnings. Interest rates may also have a direct or indirect effect on loan demand, loan losses, mortgage origination volume, the fair value of MSRs and other items affecting earnings.

ALCO measures and evaluates the interest rate risk so that we can meet customer demands for various types of loans and deposits. ALCO determines the most appropriate amounts of on-balance sheet and off-balance sheet items. Measurements used to help manage interest rate sensitivity include an earnings simulation and an economic value of equity model.

Earnings simulation. Management believes that interest rate risk is best estimated by our earnings simulation modeling. On at least a quarterly basis, the following 12 month time period is simulated to determine a baseline net interest income forecast and the sensitivity of this forecast to changes in interest rates. The baseline forecast assumes an unchanged or flat interest rate environment. Forecasted levels of earning assets, interest-bearing liabilities, and off-balance sheet financial instruments are combined with ALCO forecasts of market interest rates for the next 12 months and other factors in order to produce various earnings simulations and estimates.

To limit interest rate risk, we have guidelines for earnings at risk which seek to limit the variance of net interest income to less than a 10 percent decline for a 200 basis point gradual change up or down in rates from management's baseline net interest income forecast over the next 12 months. The following table reports the variance of net interest income over the next 12 months assuming a gradual change in interest rates of 200 basis points when compared to the baseline net interest income forecast at December 31, 2011.

Changes in Interest Rates	Net Interest Income % Variance
200 basis points	5.37 %
(200) basis points	NM

NM=not meaningful

At December 31, 2011, our earnings simulation model indicated a slightly asset-sensitive position over the next 12 months, which could serve to improve net interest income during that time period if interest rates increased by 200 basis points. The actual realized change in net interest income would depend upon several factors, which could also serve to diminish, or eliminate the asset sensitivity noted above. The impact of rate scenarios assuming a gradual downward 200 basis point change in interest rates was not considered meaningful because of the historically low interest rate environment.

Economic Value of Equity. Economic value of equity ("EVE") measures the extent that estimated economic values of our assets, liabilities and off-balance sheet items will change as a result of interest rate changes. Economic values are estimated by discounting expected cash flows from assets, liabilities and off-balance sheet items, which establishes a base case EVE. In contrast with our earnings simulation model which evaluates interest rate risk over a 12 month timeframe, EVE uses a terminal horizon which allows for the re-pricing of all assets, liabilities, and off-balance sheet items. Further, EVE is measured using values as of a point in time and does not reflect any actions that ALCO might take in responding to or anticipating changes in interest rates, or market and competitive conditions.

To help limit interest rate risk, we have a guideline stating that for a 200 basis point instantaneous change in interest rates up or down, EVE should not decrease by more than 25 percent. The following table reports the variance of EVE assuming an immediate change in interest rates of 200 basis points when compared to the base case EVE at December 31, 2011.

Changes in Interest Rates	EVE % Variance
200 basis points	(13.36) %
(200) basis points	NM

NM=not meaningful

At December 31, 2011, the results of our EVE model would indicate that we are in compliance with our guidelines. The actual realized change in the economic value of equity would depend upon several factors, which could also serve to diminish, or eliminate the interest sensitivity noted above. The impact of rate shock scenarios assuming a downward 200 basis point change in interest rates was not considered meaningful because of the historically low interest rate environment.