

Instructional Program Review

Program Name: **Economics**

Program Contact: **Lehigh, Steven**

Academic Year: **2016-2017**

Status: **Submitted for review**

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1. Description of Program

Provide a brief description of the program and how it supports the college's [College Mission and Diversity Statements](#), [CSM Strategic Goals 2013/14 to 2015/16](#), and other [Institutional Program Planning](#) as appropriate. What is the program's vision for sustaining and improving student learning and success over the next three years?

The Economics program provides two courses, introductory Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, primarily to students seeking to transfer or obtain an AA/AS degree. The department offers approximately 8 courses a semester, roughly split evenly between the two courses. The department is relatively small, currently consisting of one full time faculty member and one adjunct faculty member.

The guidelines for the AA-T in Economics have been finalized at the state level and the degree has been established at CSM, streamlining the transfer process for students interested in majoring in Economics. In addition, the courses are a core element for students majoring in Business or related fields, and is a popular elective for students majoring in math and science.

In addition to regular campus duties, Economics faculty have also participated in professional development activities, various committees, the honors program and established a solid relationship with the Learning Center to provide high quality tutoring and review sessions for our courses. The department seeks to maintain quality teaching in the classroom and access to assistance outside the classroom, ultimately pursuing the goals outlined in the college mission. Specifically we seek to promote academic excellence (CSM Strategic Goal 2), develop critical thinking skills, and provide relevant information to promote students' intellectual pursuits and academic success (CSM Strategic Goal 1).

2. Student Learning and Program Data

A. Discuss Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Reflect on recent SLO assessment results for courses and degrees and certificates offered by the program. Specify how SLO assessment informs curriculum development and changes to curriculum.

This past year all SLOs were assessed in both 100 and 102. Success rates on the 6 SLOs ranged from 75%-90%, surpassing the 70% threshold for success. The results were in the same range as the previous assessment, confirming the department is continuing to deliver content in an effective manner and achieving our goals overall.

SLO 3 for Econ 100 (Evaluate Fiscal and Monetary Policy) was the poorest result. The topic requires students to fundamentally understand a model of the economy and its cycles, then integrate the role of government and the Federal Reserve as well. Given that most of our students come in with little prior knowledge of these concepts, and the complexity of them, it makes sense that it is the most challenging to grasp. As a department we will continue to explore methods to improve our delivery, including using various tools and simulations that continue to emerge. For instance for Fiscal Policy there are "solve the budget" simulations which help understand the short term and long term impacts of the government budget. As well as "be the Fed" simulations where students play

the role of the Federal Reserve responding to different economic information. Hopefully tools such as these and as well as emerging options will help make these challenging topics more relatable.

The department will continue to explore effective ways to assess our students and has been active in the conversation about possible modifications to SLO assessment practices.

2. Comment on the success rates in the program SLOs that are aligned with specific course SLOs. What do the program SLO and course data reveal about students completing the program? Identify trends and discuss areas in need of improvement. Is the alignment between course and program SLOs appropriate and informative? Describe any additional methods used to assess program SLOs and reflect on the results of those assessments. See [course-to-program SLO alignment mapping](#).

Currently the Program SLO mapping is not available on the CSM resource page referenced above, so I will quickly outline it here:

Program SLO 1 - All 6 course SLOs align

Program SLO 2 - Course SLOs 2 and 3 for both Econ 100 and 102 align

Program SLO 3 - Course SLO 1 and 3 for Econ 100, Course SLO 1 and 2 for Econ 102 align

Both of the courses are structured in such a way that students learn about the core theories and models of each discipline, how to apply them in a variety of ways and evaluate the outcomes. Additionally, one of the core principles of economics is utilizing both positive and normative analysis, which highlights how to use models to understand multiple viewpoints.

Given that our students have shown satisfactory results in our course SLO assessments, it is reasonable to assume they are also satisfying the related Program SLOs as well.

3. For any courses in the program that satisfy a GE requirement, which GE SLOs are supported or reinforced by the course SLOs? What do assessment results for the course SLOs (and for the GE SLOs, if available) reveal about student attainment of the GE SLOs? See [GE SLO Alignment Summary Report](#) or [All Courses GE SLO Alignment Data](#).

Both Econ 100 and 102 course SLOs directly align with the GE SLOs addressing effective communication, quantitative reasoning and critical thinking. Econ 100 covers models including gains from trade, supply and demand, growth theory and business cycle theory. Econ 102 covers models on gains from trade, supply and demand, market inefficiencies, utility optimization, firm production and market competition. In each class, students must be able to interpret and manipulate models, provide verbal/written analysis and critically apply them to various scenarios. Given that our students have shown satisfactory results in our course SLO assessments, it is reasonable to assume they are also satisfying the related GE SLOs as well.

In addition, even though the SLOs may not explicitly align, many of the concepts covered in both courses touch on social awareness, ethical responsibility and effective citizenship. Students must understand and balance the challenges of resource allocation given a variety of circumstances.

B. Student Success Indicators

1. Review [Student Success and Core Program Indicators](#) and discuss any differences in student success indicators across demographic variables. Also refer to the [College Index](#) and other relevant sections of the [Educational Master Plan: Update, 2012](#), e.g., Student Outcomes and Student Outcomes: Transfer. Basic Skills programs should also refer to [ARCC](#) data.

For the previous two years the Success Rate was 67% and Retention Rate was 85.5%, which is consistent with the average for the past 5 years. The rates have been relatively close to the overall college averages of approximately 71% and 85% respectively. Considering the level of analytical and critical thinking our courses require, our rates seem reasonably close to the campus average and are in the same range as similar departments, such as Philosophy. The department is very active in the Learning Center, assisting to provide free tutoring 5 days a week, and exam review sessions. As reported by the Learning Center, the Success Rate in

Econ for those utilizing the services was 75% versus 60% for those not. In addition, Econ has one of the highest usage rates of the tutoring services at the LC, indicating that we are doing a good job of promoting the service and utilizing it to improve student performance.

Across demographics, our averages are consistent with the trends of the college as a whole. Any large variability in Success Rates over the last three years occurs in groups with small population sizes, the larger demographic groups have all shown fairly consistent rates over that time. Rates for gender type and age are also consistent with the campus-wide trends and don't seem specific to Economics courses. In 2014 a math prerequisite was implemented for both courses, it does not seem to have made any impact on success. Without controlling for other variables like English placement or average time spent working outside of school etc., it's hard to know where the source of the differences are coming from. The fact that our trends are consistent with college-wide trends indicates that there are other variables at play and that it is not something specific to our courses. The department will continue to stay abreast of programs that assist in closing the campus-wide gaps in achievement.

2. Discuss any differences in student success indicators across modes of delivery (on-campus versus distance education). Refer to [Delivery Mode Course Comparison](#).

N/A – Economics is currently only offered as a face-to-face class.

C. Program Efficiency Indicators. Do we deliver programs efficiently given our resources?

Summarize trends in program efficiency as indicated in the [Student Success and Core Program Indicators](#) (LOAD, Full-time and Part-time FTEF, etc.)

While enrollments have declined, consistent with a college-wide trend, LOAD has remained relatively stable. To maintain efficiency, the department now regularly offers 8 courses a semester instead of 10. The department has had a LOAD of over 600 for the past 3 years, indicating that course offerings seem to be enrolled close to capacity, with multiple day and evening options. The Full-time FTEF and Part-time FTEF were 2 and 1.2 respectively, which is reasonable given the amount of overall class offerings. Given the college average is a LOAD of 500, the performance of the department is providing a positive return to the college efficiency.

The department is also in regular contact with our counterparts at the other campuses to limit overlap of course offerings, especially with evening courses, to increase flexibility for our students and limit impact on enrollments.

3. Additional Factors

Discuss additional factors as applicable that impact the program, including changes in student populations, state-wide initiatives, transfer requirements, advisory committee recommendations, legal mandates, workforce development and employment opportunities, community needs. See [Institutional Research](#) as needed.

Everything is relatively stable in regards to external factors that might impact the department. As previously mentioned, course offerings have been reduced to correspond with the decrease in enrollment. The AA-T is in place and all other criteria for the transfer process remain the same.

The only upcoming change is a proposal to include Math 190 as an equivalent to the current prerequisite, allowing more access to our courses for students choosing different academic paths. Math 190 provides adequate coverage of the math concepts needed for economics courses and is a sufficient equivalent to Math 110 for the purposes of a prerequisite.

We are also currently exploring the opportunity to create and offer online courses. The first course may be offered as soon as Fall

2017.

4. Planning

A. Results of Program Plans and Actions

Describe results, including measurable outcomes, from plans and actions in recent program reviews.

We have continued to have a strong relationship with the Learning Center, utilizing their expertise and support network to provide additional services to help our students succeed. The data has shown a difference of 15% in the Success Rates for students using the tutoring services for Economics (75% vs. 60%).

After an initial increase in student usage of the tutoring service, it has now leveled off the past few years. Our students continue to be one of the largest contingents to use tutoring, which is significant given our declining enrollment and overall size relative to some other departments. The department has worked with the LC to expand on the typical drop in tutoring, providing exam review sessions that are popular with the students. Based on the success rate differences, there is tangible evidence that they improve student performance.

B. Future Program Plans and Actions

Prioritize the plans to be carried out to sustain and improve student success. Briefly describe each plan and how it supports the [CSM Strategic Goals 2013/14 to 2015/16](#). For each plan, list actions and measurable outcomes. Plans may extend beyond a single year. Describe the professional activities and institutional collaborations that would be most effective in carrying out the program's vision to improve student learning and success.

Now that we've completed our second SLO assessment have confirmation that students are achieving the outcomes expected from our courses. We will continue to reflect on the quality of the assessment, potentially experiment with other methods and make adjustments accordingly. Given that two cycles of assessments indicated student success, it appears our current teaching methods are providing effective delivery of the content.

Our integration with the Learning Center has yielded successful results and we will continue to explore opportunities to expand services to our students to improve student success and the efficiency with which we deliver our courses. One challenge is getting as many students as possible to attend review sessions and see the tutors. Additionally, there is a learning curve and some volatility with the tutors as well. To be a tutor the students need to have completed both courses, so generally they are second year students. Most likely they will be transferring the next year, thus we're constantly cycling through three new tutors every year. We work hard to identify good candidates to apply but it is a challenge to maintain excellence year to year given the circumstances.

We are working towards adding online courses, in conjunction with the switch to Canvas. The courses will most likely be taught by our full time faculty member, who has completed STOT training and serves on the Distance Education and Education Technology Committee (DEETC).

5. Program Maintenance

A. Course Outline Updates

Review the [course outline update record](#). List the courses that will be updated in the next academic year. For each course that will be updated, provide a faculty contact and the planned submission month. See the [Committee on Instruction](#) website for [course submission instructions](#). Contact your division's [COI representatives](#) if you have questions about submission deadlines. **Career and Technical Education courses must be updated every two years.**

Courses to be updated	Faculty contact	Submission month
None		

B. Website Review

Review the program's website(s) annually and update as needed.

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Steven Lehigh	9/1/2017

C. SLO Assessment Contacts

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Steven Lehigh	TBD - awaiting the updated guidelines, currently under review by the CSM SLO

	Coordinator.

6. Dominant Themes Summary for IPC

Briefly summarize the dominant, most important themes or trends contained in this program review, for division deans to collect and forward to the Institutional Planning Committee. What are the key program issues that matter most? (Brief paragraph or bullet points acceptable).

- The department is in a relative state of stability. SLOs are being regularly assessed, courses are up to date, the AA-T is in place. There have been no major changes to the discipline or its place within various degrees.
- Courses are regularly full, a variety of day/evening courses are offered to cover student needs.
- Online courses are in development.
- An alternative Math prereq is being proposed to keep the course accessible to as many students as possible.
- SLO goals have been met for two consecutive cycles.
- Faculty members actively participate in campus committees, activities and professional development, keeping current on programs and other offerings relevant to our students.
- We continue to have one of the highest usage rates of the tutoring services at the Learning Center, where we have worked with them to offer specialized review sessions for exams.