Department: Economics
Assessment Coordinator: Shawn D. Knabb

Departmental Mission

The mission of the department is to provide students with an understanding of economic concepts and the functioning of the economy, and to equip them with the ability to apply economic analysis in problem solving. The department strives to provide a major program which gives students rigorous training in both economic theory and applications. The department plays an integral role in offering courses that are a component of Western’s General University Requirements and that are part of other undergraduate and graduate programs in the college and in the University. The department views the conduct of research in economics, and applied research in particular, to be an integral part of its instructional mission. In addition, the department strives to serve both the profession and the community and to help raise the level of economic awareness among the public at large.

Department Student Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, (Department or Program) majors will be able to:

1. Apply economic analysis to evaluate economic problems and specific policy proposals.
2. Understand how to interpret statistical results and use empirical evidence to evaluate an economic argument.
3. In specific fields of economics, develop deeper critical and quantitative thinking skills and apply problem-solving skills to complex problems.
4. Communicate economic ideas effectively in written, spoken, and graphical form.
5. Understand the importance of scarcity, opportunity cost, incentives, and tradeoffs.
6. Understand the factors that determine the level of income, employment, output and prices in an economic system.

GUR Student Learning Outcomes

3. Use quantitative and scientific reasoning to frame and solve problems.
4. Identify and analyze complex problems.
11. Understand and assess the impacts of interactions among the individual, society, and the environment.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year

1. Apply economic analysis to evaluate economic problems and specific policy proposals.
3. In specific fields of economics, develop deeper critical and quantitative thinking skills and apply problem-solving skills to complex problems.
### “Closing the Loop”: Program Improvement Documentation • Evidence Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Change</th>
<th>SLOs Targeted for Improvement</th>
<th>Description of Program Improvement</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Evidence that will demonstrate if this change improves student learning.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curricular</strong></td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>The department will explore how to improve the quantitative skills of our students before taking 400 level courses. A potential solution is to require or advise students to take a course in mathematical economics at the 300 or 400 level. The department does not currently have a course of this type in the catalog, so a new course will need to be developed. This course is currently being developed by department faculty. The department also added two new faculty members for this academic year, which will hopefully allow us to offer the course in the near future.</td>
<td>The assessment coordinator and the department chair reviewed student performance on tests and homework and found that some students have difficulty applying basic mathematical skills required in the field. As a consequence, some students struggled setting up economic problems and could not use the models to address policy issues.</td>
<td>A follow-up assessment will be done in the same courses to see if there is an improvement in overall performance. There will also be additional courses included in the next evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support</strong></td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>The department seeks to find or create additional opportunities for students to identify fields of study in economics and employment opportunities in these fields. In the spring of 2016 a seminar titled “Employment Opportunities for Economics Graduates” was presented to the students. The department plans to continue to offer this seminar.</td>
<td>The assessment coordinator and the department chair found that some students were not well informed about employment/graduate school opportunities within the discipline. Consequently, the department seeks to find or create additional opportunities for students to receive information about employment/graduate school opportunities with a degree in economics.</td>
<td>A follow-up assessment will be done to see if there is an improvement in the students’ knowledge of opportunities in the field of economics. We will use the OSR exit survey and additional courses in the next evaluation cycle to broaden the scope of the study.</td>
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<td>Assessment Plan</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>The Assessment Plan should be revised to include more courses (currently only two courses were used to assess the SLO's), which will improve the overall assessment of each SLO in a given cycle.</td>
<td>This will enable us to better assess student achievement for a broader group of students.</td>
<td>The Assessment Plan has been revised: Additional 400 level courses will be added to the assessment of the SLO's during the next cycle.</td>
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