

Assurance of Student Learning Reflection 2024-2025

<i>Gordon Ford College of Business</i>	<i>Economics</i>
<i>Economics BA 638</i>	
<i>David Zimmer, Chair</i>	
Is this an online program? ☐ Yes ☒ No	Please make sure the Program Learning Outcomes listed match those in CourseLeaf. Indicate verification here ☒ Yes, they match! (If they don't match, explain on this page under Evaluation)

Instructions: For the 2024-25 assessment, we are asking you to reflect on the last three-year cycle rather than collect data. It's important to take time to look over the results from the last assessment cycle and really focus on a data-informed direction going forward. In collaboration with your assessment team and program faculty, review each submitted template from 2021-2024 and consider the following for each Program Learning Outcome, add your narrative to the template, and submit the draft to your **ASL Rep** by **May 15, 2025**.

Program Student Learning Outcome 1	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate ability to conduct economic research.
Evaluation	This SLO remains relevant and crucial to our discipline.
Measurement Instruments	We feel that our measurement instrument remains appropriate and accurately captures the outcome. Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. One of the requirements of the course is to write a research paper that synthesizes the knowledge obtained in the program. Students choose a research topic, find the relevant data to conduct empirical tests, and perform statistical calculations to answer their research questions. Students are instructed to structure their papers similarly to an economics journal article and include an introduction, literature review, data and methodology section, analysis of empirical results, and a conclusion. Papers are evaluated on the following criteria: 1. Did a student formulate an appropriate research question grounded in economic theory? 2. Does the paper contain an adequate literature review? 3. Did the student employ appropriate data to test the hypothesis? 4. Did the student correctly interpret the findings in the paper?
Criteria & Targets	At the end of the program, students should be able to perform at the level of Capstone (4) or Milestone (3) according to <i>LEAP Inquiry and Analysis</i> rubric. 80% or more students should meet this target. This is an appropriate target.
Results & Conclusion	<u>Results:</u> Our students have consistently met or exceeded this target during recent years. <u>Conclusions:</u> Around 2010, our department set out to increase the rigor of our capstone research projects. In particular, we set about hiring faculty with skills central to helping students improve those projects. We are extremely pleased with how students have performed on those projects, especially during recent years.

<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	We do not believe we need to make changes to the measurement instrument of methods for assessing success. However, given how well our students have performed on this SLO, we are having an internal debate about whether we need to increase the threshold for success to greater than 80%. We would prefer to wait another cycle or two to ascertain whether performances remain as high as they have.
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Program Student Learning Outcome 2	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate ability to convey their research findings using oral communication
Evaluation	This SLO remains relevant and crucial to our discipline.
Measurement Instruments	We feel that our measurement instrument remains appropriate and accurately captures the outcome. Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During that course, students are required to write a paper and present it to the economics faculty. The presentations are structured as a mini-conference with each student giving a poster presentation. Each student is required to prepare a poster, deliver a brief summary of his or her paper, and answer follow-up questions. The presentations are evaluated on the following criteria: 1. Was the information organized well on the poster? 2. Did the student follow good practices when designing the poster? 3. Did the student present the material well?
Criteria & Targets	Students' presentations were rated on the three criteria listed above using a 1-4 scale for each criterion. The scores were assigned based on LEAP <i>Oral Communication</i> rubric items (1) Organization, (2) Supporting Material, (3) and Language. Using this rubric, each evaluator produced an average score for each presentation by computing a simple average of the three items of the rubric, with each student receiving three scores – one from each evaluator – and the mean of these three scores was computed for each student. 80% or more students should meet this target. This is an appropriate target.
Results & Conclusion	Results: Our students have not consistently met or exceeded this target during recent years. Scores have landed in the mid 70s. Conclusions: Despite the overall high quality of the projects, students' abilities to convey their research findings have consistently fallen below the 80% threshold.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	We do not believe we need to make changes to the measurement instrument or methods for assessing success. We do, however, need to better prepare students for the presentation portion of the project. We are in the process of making changes to the course in which those projects occur (ECON 499). In particular, we have introduced formal presentations, which are intended to prepare students to present their projects. We hope those changes help us achieve the 80% threshold in subsequent cycles.

Program Student Learning Outcome 3	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of microeconomics.
Evaluation	This SLO remains relevant and crucial to our discipline.
Measurement Instruments	We feel that our measurement instrument remains appropriate and accurately captures the outcome. Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During the course, students have to take two exams – a microeconomics exam and a macroeconomics exam. The exams used in the class have been developed by the National Council for Economic Education (NCEE). These exams were designed with two objectives in mind: “(1)... to offer a reliable and valid assessment instrument for students in principles of economics courses; and (2) to provide norming data for large national sample of students in principles classes...”. The exams cover a range of economic topics and can serve as a good measure not only of the attainment of knowledge in the principles courses but also as a measure of retention and reinforcement of that knowledge throughout the program.
Criteria & Targets	At the end of the program students should perform at the 70th percentile or higher compared to the national sample of economics principles students. This is an appropriate target.
Results & Conclusion	<u>Results:</u> Our students have consistently met or exceeded this target during recent years. Scores have landed in the mid 80s. <u>Conclusions:</u> Students are performing at an appropriate level for this SLO.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	We do not believe we need to make changes to the measurement instrument or methods for assessing success. The NCEE exams are rigorous, nationally-relevant tools for assessing knowledge in our discipline. The main internal debate is whether we need to increase the threshold to 75% or 80%. If scores remain high during subsequent cycles, we might undertake such a revision.

Program Student Learning Outcome 4	
Program Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of macroeconomics.
Evaluation	This SLO remains relevant and crucial to our discipline.
Measurement Instruments	We feel that our measurement instrument remains appropriate and accurately captures the outcome. Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During the course, students have to take two exams – a microeconomics exam and a macroeconomics exam. The exams used in the class have been developed by the National Council for Economic Education (NCEE). These exams were designed with two objectives in mind: “(1)... to offer a reliable and valid assessment instrument for students in principles of economics courses; and (2) to provide norming data for large national sample of students in principles classes...”. The exams cover a range of economic topics and can serve as a good measure not only of the attainment of knowledge in the principles courses but also as a measure of retention and reinforcement of that knowledge throughout the program.
Criteria & Targets	At the end of the program students should perform at the 70th percentile or higher compared to the national sample of economics principles students. This is an appropriate target.
Results & Conclusion	<u>Results</u>: Our students have consistently met or exceeded this target during recent years. Scores have landed in the mid 70s. <u>Conclusions</u>: Students are performing at an appropriate level for this SLO.
<u>**IMPORTANT - Plans for Next Assessment Cycle:</u>	We do not believe we need to make changes to the measurement instrument or methods for assessing success. The NCEE exams are rigorous, nationally-relevant tools for assessing knowledge in our discipline. With scores sitting just a bit above our threshold, we don't seek to make changes to that threshold, but we intend on monitoring performance closely for this SLO.