

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Economics

Program Summary

2021-2022

Prepared by: Christian Anderson and Lucy Malakar

What are the strengths of your area?: The essential strength of Economics Department lies in its faculty. This past year the department has doubled in size having hired an experienced full-time faculty member and by appreciably expanding its adjunct pool. This has allowed for a significant expansion of economics offerings in terms of section numbers, meeting times and course modalities. Census enrollment in all economics courses increased by 23% between AY2019-20 and AY 20-21.

During the 2020 - 21 academic year Christian Anderson continued to co-chair IPRC, the District's Institutional Review Board, and the Research Advisory Work-group. While in her first year at COS, Lucy Malakar represented the Social Sciences Division on the Faculty Enrichment Committee and served on the Political Science Faculty hiring committee. She also continued projects from her previous position that resulted in two academic publications.

Complementing the strength of the faculty is the quality of the department's curriculum. Success rates for courses in the department are similar or better than the average for UC transferable courses at COS (72% to 85% over the last three academic years).

ECON success rates were relatively consistent across ethnicity/race and gender (79% male / 82% female) over the same period:

- 81% African Americans
- 92% Asians
- 79% Hispanic
- 84% White

Additionally, success rates between face-to-face (80.4%) and online (81.2%) offerings were nearly identical during the past three academic years.

One interesting trend is the increasing proportion of female students over the past three academic years from 43% in AY 18-19 to just over 50% in AY 2020-21. The shortage of women and historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the economics profession has received considerable public attention in the past several years. As places of rich social diversity, community colleges can help attract greater numbers of diverse students into an economics major and, in the process, create a more diverse, inclusive pipeline of economist. Since the 2018 -19 academic year, 73 students have declared their major as Associate in Arts in Economics for Transfer and 15 degrees have been awarded.

What improvements are needed?: Details of planned improvements can be found in the SLO and PLO sections below.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: The main external challenge continues to be the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which forced instruction in new modalities that were a struggle for both students and faculty. During AY 2020-21, all economics courses were remote (either synchronous via Zoom or asynchronous). In Fall 2021, 50% of the economics courses are again meeting face-to-face. As a result, outcomes during this period may prove to be highly anomalous, especially considering the large number of EWs during the last two academic years.

AB705 continues to pose an important external challenge to the department. New externally mandated placement procedures ,ay result in and increased demand for course sections and a greater number of students become eligible to enroll and will result in the enrollment of under-prepared students.

Under-prepared students require additional academic support. Currently the CCCCO and the California Acceleration Project suggest that this reality be met through the development and offering of co-requisite curriculum (see <https://accelerationproject.org/> and <https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation/>). The department will need to

both student need and the feasibility of offering such a support course for ECON 40 over the next academic year.

Many COS students are under-resourced and may have difficulty affording the increased cost of textbooks and other course materials. To address this, the department will evaluate OpenStax' Principles of Economics 2E OER and supplemental homework tools for possible adoption in ECON 40 and ECON 50 courses.

Overall SLO Achievement: Due to the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the hiring of a new full-time faculty member and the increased workload required of new instructional modalities, SLO assessments were not conducted during the 2020-2021 academic year. Consequently, no new information is available at this time. However, the department continues to maintain overall successful course completion rates similar to the college/division for UC transferable courses despite being above average in terms of difficulty. The department has outlined a plan to assess SLOs going forward as detailed elsewhere in the program review.

Changes Based on SLO Achievement: None at this time for the reasons outlined above.

Overall PLO Achievement: The AA-T in Economics has had very few graduates (15 overall and only 3 in the 2020-2021 academic year). Furthermore, only 6 of 22 units that comprise the major are taught in the economics department making the evaluation of PLO achievement impractical. For this reason, PLO assessment has not taken place.

Changes Based on PLO Achievement: We plan to evaluate the COR for each class in the AA-T in Economics to validate that the curriculum contributes to PLO achievement.

Outcome cycle evaluation: With the addition of an experienced full-time faculty member the department met to evaluate gaps and formed a plan to assess SLO achievement going forward. See the pertinent action for more details on this plan which will bring us in sync with the 3-year outcome evaluation cycle.

Action: 2020-21: Scheduling

Department faculty will evaluate enrollment data and assess student needs related to the scheduling of course offerings.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Full-time department faculty, scheduling chair, division dean

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: Medium

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2021-2022

08/27/2021

Status: Action Completed

During Spring 2020, the economics faculty conferred with dean and division scheduling chair to assess and update course scheduling for AY 2021-2022 and beyond. Economics courses are offered in multiple modalities and at various times during the day and evening.

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES by 1.75% over the three years

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years

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Action: 2020-21: SLO assessment

Evaluate the current gaps in the assessment cycle and formulate a plan to recover.

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Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Christian Anderson & Lucy Malakar, full-time faculty

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: Accreditation

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2021-2022

09/08/2021

Status: Continue Action Next Year

In Fall 2021, full-time faculty met to assess the gaps in the assessment cycle and formulate a plan to recover. The plan includes the following:

AY 2021-2022

**Fall 2021: Identify 3 to 5 test questions that cover each course SLO

**Spring 2022: Gather data on student SLO achievement

AY 2022-2023

**Fall 2022: Gather data on student SLO achievement

**Spring 2023: Analyze data, review outcomes, decide on any necessary changes

AY 2023-2024

**Implement any necessary changes and continue gathering data.

This will put economics back on track in the three year assessment cycle and will support continuous quality improvement.

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required): Will support District Objective 4.1 - increase the use of data for decision-making at the District and department/unit level

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 4.1 - Increase the use of data for decision-making at the District and department/unit level

Action: 2020-21: AB705

Explore and evaluate the possibility of offering support courses with mathematics prerequisites (i.e. ECON 40 & 50)

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Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021, 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

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Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Christian Anderson & Lucy Malakar, full-time faculty

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: AB705

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2021-2022

09/08/2021

Status: Continue Action Next Year

Faculty met in Fall 2021 and agreed that the course most in need of a support course in Econ 40. Faculty will continue to explore and evaluate the possibility of offering a support course beginning in AY 2022-23 or AY 2023-24.

During this academic year (AY 2021-22) faculty will meet to discuss potential topics for the course and develop or identify course materials.

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required): Will support District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate by 5 percentage points over 3 years and

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years.

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-ready by 15% and students who transfer to four-year institutions by 10% from 2021-2025.

Action: 2015-16 SLO Assessment Improvement

The department will develop new summative assessments for the course level outcomes in ECON 25, Introduction to economics. In addition, the department will obtain and utilize the macroeconomics version of the Test of Understanding of College Economics (TUCE) for ECON 50, Principles of Macroeconomics.

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Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021, 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes: All course level outcomes in ECON 25, ECON 40, and ECON 50

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Christian Anderson, Professor

Rationale (With supporting data): The TUCE is a nationally normed standardized test (developed by the American Economic Association) for evaluation of learning outcomes in the discipline of economics.

Priority: Medium

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

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Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2015-2018

District Objectives - 2.1 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-prepared annually.

District Objectives - 2.2 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate annually.

Action: 2021-22: OER Evaluation

In an effort to address increasing textbook and materials costs, California launched its statewide Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) degree initiative in 2016. ZTC aims to replace conventional textbooks with open educational resources and other no-cost materials in an entire degree or certificate program. In line with this effort, faculty will review and evaluation OpenStax' Principles of Economics 2E and supporting homework tools for possible adoption.

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Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Christian Anderson & Lucy Malakar

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.