

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Economics

Program Summary

2022-2023

Prepared by: Christian Anderson and Lucy Malakar

What are the strengths of your area?: The essential strength of Economics Department (ED) lies in the depth of its faculty members' experience. Despite having more than 30 combined years of teaching experience, the faculty continue to seek out and participate in professional development having attended "Teaching Economics in Changing times: The Role of Cognitive Science in Teaching and Learning Economics" hosted by the Federal Reserve. Other professional development activities are detailed below.

The doubling of size of seasoned, fulltime faculty and the addition of qualified adjuncts has allowed for an expansion of economics offerings in terms of section numbers, meeting times and course modalities. While census enrollment in all economics courses held constant between AY2020-21 and AY 21-22 the number of ECON AA-T majors increased by 42% between these two academic years.

According to the COS Master Plan, the department's productivity target is 19.43 FTES/FTEF. Despite limitations on classroom size due to COVID during the 21-22 academic year, the department managed to produce an efficiency ratio of 18.29. This can be considered an achievement under these circumstances.

During the 2021 - 22 academic year Christian Anderson continued to co-chair IPRC, the District's Institutional Review Board, and the Research Advisory Work-group as well as Chair the COSTA Elections Committee. Lucy Malakar represented the Social Sciences Division on the Faculty Enrichment Committee and on COSTA. She also enrolled in The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) "Effective Online Teach Practices Course" and participated in several publisher sponsored professional development webinars:

- **3/8/2022 "The Great Resignation" featuring Betsey Stevenson, PhD; Facilitated by Cengage Publishing

- **3/15/2022 "If Economics is So Important, Why are so few People Listening?" featuring Charles Wheelan, PhD; offered by Norton Publishing

- **4/26/2022 "Using Economics to Save the World: A Former White House Economist on Why It Is Time to be Optimistic about Climate Change"

by Benjamin Ho

Complementing the strength of the faculty is the quality of the department's curriculum. Success rates for all courses in the department dipped slightly during the 2021 -22 academic year (74.7%) from the multi-year average in the department (76.7%) but remain similar or better than the average for transferable courses at COS since AY 2016-17 (72.8%).

ECON success rates are nearly identical across gender (76.8% male / 76.6% female) and are relatively consistent across ethnicity/race over the same period:

- 73% African Americans

- 86% Asians

- 75% Hispanic

- 81% White

- 80% Multi ethnicity

Additionally, success rates between face-to-face (76.5%) and online (78.2%) offerings are similar over the past six academic years. All of these statistics are comparable to or above the institutional average of 74.0% over the same period.

An interesting, continuing trend is the increasing proportion of female students over the past six academic years from 43% in AY16-17 to just over 50% in AY 2021-22. 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 2016 -17 academic year, 153 students have declared their major as Associate in Arts in Economics for Transfer and 21 degrees have been awarded.

What improvements are needed?: The department and COS would benefit from identifying and hiring additional qualified adjunct instructors.

The department also faces significant scheduling challenges in trying to meet student demand for online ECON courses while complying with the administrative directive of limiting online sections to 25% of ECON course offerings. Typically, 9 or 10 sections of ECON are offered per semester. If we offer at least one online section for each course (ECON 25, 40, 50) that automatically puts us over the 25% limit since $3/9 = 33\%$ and $3/10 = 30\%$

In addition, the department might be able to better support students who have declared their major to be economics to attain their degree.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: The Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a predominant external challenge. Fall 2021 ushered in a full return to class room instruction amidst a corresponding spike in Covid cases. Similarly Spring 2022 began during a nationwide surge in the highly contagious Omicron variant. As such, numerous students contracted Covid and missed several weeks of in-person instruction which is a likely cause of the dip in overall success rates.

The continually shifting legislative landscape continues to be an important external challenge to the department, namely the recent passage of AB 1705 which requires that students enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics within a one-year timeframe of their initial attempt in the discipline within their majors. The department will need to more thoroughly understand and assess the potential impact of AB 1705 over the next several academic years.

An external opportunity is the proposed synchronization and harmonizing of general education requirements between the UC and CSU systems.

Overall SLO Achievement: The department has outlined a plan to assess SLOs going forward as detailed elsewhere in TracDat.

Changes Based on SLO Achievement: N/A

Overall PLO Achievement: PLO assessment has not been undertaken over the past year.

Changes Based on PLO Achievement: Mapping the AA-T PLOs to course SLOs will be addressed in the current year.

Outcome cycle evaluation: We are now in the process of getting back on track for the 3-year outcome evaluation cycle. See the pertinent action update for more details on this plan.

Action: 2020-21: SLO assessment

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

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021, 2021 - 2022, 2022 - 2023

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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: 2022 - 2023

09/07/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

Program Review - Economics

We are back on largely back on track for SLO assessment:

Developed Plan: AY 2021 -2022

**we met to evaluate gaps in SLO assessments and determined our plan to get back on track;

**selected SLO #2 from ECON 025.

**selected SLO #2 from ECON 040.

**selected SLO #2 from ECON 050.

**ECON 040 and 050 SLOs will be assessed using selected questions from the Test of Understanding in College Economics (TUCE) which is a standardized test of economics nationally norm-referenced in the United States for use at the undergraduate level, primarily targeting introductory or principles-level coursework in economics. It is sponsored and published by the National Council on Economic Education.

The Test of Economic Literacy (TEL) will be used to assess ECON 25.

Implement Plan: AY 2022-2023

**ECON 025 SLO will be assessed using TEL on final exam

**ECON 040 and 050 SLO will be assessed via TUCE questions in final exams

Analyze Plan: AY 2023-2024

**will review and analyze SLO data to make any necessary adjustments to courses and/or program

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

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 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 3.2 - By 2021, increase the percentage of students in targeted groups who complete transfer-level English (by 10 percentage points) and transfer-level math (by 5 percentage points) within their first year

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

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 4.1 - Increase the effective use of data and transparency in decision making at all institutional levels from 2021-2025.

Program Review - Economics

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, 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank:

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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: AB705

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2022 - 2023

09/07/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

As a first step in exploring the possibility of developing a support course for ECON 040, we selected an outstanding microeconomics (ECON 040) student to serve as SI for ECON 040 classes in Fall 2022. We will monitor how SI sessions go in terms of attendance and impact on course success to see if should continue selecting SIs or offer a faculty-led support course.

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

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: 2021-22: OER Evaluation

Program Review - Economics

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:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2022 - 2023

09/07/2022

Status: Action Completed

We have evaluated "Principles of Economics" by Openstax. While the topical coverage is adequate to teach principles courses, practice is the key to mastery and our students need practice to successfully complete principles courses. Thus, students would have to buy access to some sort of supplemental, on-line homework tool. It would likely cost students about \$50 for 2-semester access to an online tool to accompany the Openstax text. Our current textbook publisher offers ebook access with SmartWork and InQuizitive (homework tools) for \$95 for 2-semester access.

Additionally, we are concerned about planned updates to the Openstax text. Our economy experienced huge upheaval during the Covid 19 pandemic and beyond. The current Openstax text (2e) was written in 2018, making it out-of-date and we are unsure of any plans to update it for the Covid era.

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

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 Objective 4.3 - College of the Sequoias Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff will engage in best practices and staff development to sustain effective operational systems for institutional assessment and continuous improvement.

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.

Action: 2022-23: Outreach

During this academic year we will reach out to declared economics majors to offer additional academic advising and/or information about economics as a profession. The first attempt at outreach will be via email campaign during Fall 2022.

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Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Program Review - Economics

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): There are a relatively small number of declared econ majors on campus. In an effort to engage these students and potentially increase representation of women and historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups within economics, we plan to increase interaction with and among economics majors on campus. One of the goals of these interactions is to increase the numbers of diverse students majoring in economics and, in the process, create a more diverse, inclusive pipeline of economists.

Priority: Medium

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

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: 2022-23: Online Course Offerings

Continue to work with administration regarding modality of econ course offerings to both maximize efficiency and meet student demand for online courses.

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Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: Medium

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: Administrative directive that no more than 25% of ECON course offerings can be online

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 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: 2022-23: AB1705

Research AB 1705 to determine its impact on ECON department and courses.

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Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

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Program Review - Economics

Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: Medium

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: AB 1705 recently passed by state legislature and scheduled to begin in July 2023.

Link Actions to District Objectives

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: 2022-23 PLO Mapping

Create a curricular map between PLOs and SLOs within the ECON AA-T degree .

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Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

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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): see program summary.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: Accreditation requirement

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 4.1 - Increase the effective use of data and transparency in decision making at all institutional levels from 2021-2025.