

I. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016 - 2017

Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a dynamic and collegial environment that serves our two most important goals: The creation knowledge and the education of future business leaders. We produce rigorous and relevant research that enriches the understanding and practice of business. We develop graduates whose professional expertise, skills and leadership are enhanced by a unique understanding of the global marketplace. Through our service and our achievements in research and education, we contribute to the welfare of our main constituents: our students, alumni, university, state and business partners.

Goal 1.

The overall goal of the Doctoral Programs in Economics is to provide advanced education in economics to students of outstanding ability who plan to pursue academic careers at institutions of higher learning or research oriented careers in business or government.

Curriculum

Students in the Doctoral Program in Economics are exposed to the concepts necessary for them to obtain the skills associated with program learning goals. These concepts are best illustrated in the Curriculum Alignment Matrix for Doctoral Programs in Economics.

Learning Outcome 1.

Students will be able to approach economics-related issues theoretically. Students should demonstrate a mastery of the relevant literature and have an appreciation for the usefulness and limitations of a given theory.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

Excellent – Exceptional performance characterized by noteworthy rigor, clarity, creativity, skill, knowledge, or contribution; performance worthy of commendation

Good – Better than average performance; few, if any, deficiencies noted

Adequate – Average performance; some deficiencies noted that must be corrected

Fair – Below average performance; suggests inadequate skill, knowledge, or motivation

Poor – Performance is clearly unacceptable; suggests a failure to make adequate progress toward the degree

It is expected that 85% of students will score adequate or better for this learning outcome.

Methods

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment serves as our coordinating mechanism for assessment activities. The office works closely with individual faculty members who teach the required courses identified for assessment to collect assessment data. Once data has been collected, the Institutional Research & Assessment Office then aggregates, analyzes and disseminates assessment results to faculty representatives serving as doctoral program coordinators. Doctoral program coordinators review the assessment results and complete action plans which outline what changes, if any, will be made as a result of assessment activities. Discussion of action plans received from the program coordinators for proposed changes to program learning goals, and assessment plans, processes and procedures occurs during faculty meetings of the Ph.D. Program Faculty Committee. Decisions that result from these meetings are then reported back to the faculty from whom the assessment data was originally collected, thus closing the assessment loop. Assessment of this learning goal only occurs when a student has reached the appropriate stage of the doctoral program.

Results

For this learning outcome, three students were assessed. Their average scores for Command of Literature were 4, 4, and 2.5, resulting in 67% of students receiving an average score of Adequate or better. For Conceptual and Theoretical Rigor, their average scores were 3.75, 4, and 2.25, resulting in 67% of students receiving an average score of Adequate or better.

Use of Results

In general, our students have a good command of the literature and knowledge of the theories in their area of specialization. However, sometimes we have students who are mismatched who have hard time achieving satisfactory level of proficiency.

We now have a second year research workshop we hold biweekly by volunteer faculty. In this research workshop, students make weekly presentations on different research questions. This seems to facilitate better matches of students to faculty and fields.

We are moving research requirements forward and replacing our theory field exam with a field paper to facilitate an early start to research. We will be assigning a committee to our students earlier after the second year and trying to put them on a fast track to publication before graduation. This constant communication with the faculty and early exposure to the research process should improve our students' performance at the thesis stage and communication and teaching skills early on. Moreover, with the new hires we can offer a better variety of field courses to our students and give them more choice.

Learning Outcome 2.

Students will be able to analyze data. Students should have the ability to construct, estimate, and interpret economic models.

Measures and Criteria

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Results

For this learning outcome, three students were assessed. Their average scores for Analytical Rigor were 4, 4.25, and 2, resulting in 67% of students receiving an average score of Adequate or better.

Use of Results

The majority of our students have a good command of the latest developments in the econometric approaches and theoretical models used in the literature in their fields. Some students seem to have pursued inappropriate methodologies resulting in low scores for themselves and lowering the overall program average.

Our research workshop and applied emphasis on the second year courses will help with these issues. Our second year courses are now more specialized and more in line with the teaching faculty's research agenda, which gives them an edge in introducing the students to the latest in the field.

Replacements of the field exams from theory form to a field paper should also help us identify students who are pursuing wrong approaches theoretically as well as econometrically.

Learning Outcome 3.

Students will be able to undertake original research on economic issues. This should include the abilities to critically review previous research, to develop approaches to answering relevant questions, and to appropriately draw inferences from the outcomes of these research activities. The stress is on the ability to use data appropriately to answer research questions empirically.

Measures and Criteria

In order to assure that each student is developing the skills required for the degree, the doctoral student will be evaluated on the performance criteria for Learning Goals (1) through (5) through the utilization of five scoring rubrics. The rating scale for all rubrics is as follows:

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Results

This learning outcome was not assessed in 2016.

Use of Results

This learning outcome was not assessed in 2016.

Learning Outcome 4.

Students will be able to clearly and effectively communicate the results of their research in written and oral form.

Measures and Criteria

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Results

For this learning outcome, two students were assessed. Their average scores for Effective Communication were 4 and 3, resulting in 100% of students receiving an average score of Adequate or better.

Use of Results

Some of our students have language proficiency issues.

Biweekly presentations in the research seminars will provide practice in presentation skills and help us identify issues earlier.

We will provide more mock presentation opportunities for our students and encourage them to present their work in conferences and within the department more often.

Learning Outcome 5.

Students will develop the skills required to teach college-level classes in the area of economics.

Measures and Criteria

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Results

For this learning outcome, one student was assessed. Their average score for Teaching Proficiency was 3, resulting in 100% of students receiving an average score of Adequate or better.

Use of Results

Our students need improvement on the teaching front. They are not always the most effective communicators in the classroom.

We will try to increase the number of times they work as session leaders before they get to teach on their own. We had a meeting with our second years this year who will be teaching next semester and provided them with guidelines on syllabus prep, lecture plans and exam and other administrative issues, and introduced them to the teaching resources the university provides.

We are going to have a coordinator for introductory economics courses taught by our students. We also chose a common book all graduate student instructors will use.

II. FUTURE ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR 2017 - 2018

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Goal 1.

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PhD ECON Curriculum Alignment Matrix

Curriculum

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Learning Outcome 1.

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Learning Outcome 5.

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