

Assessment Report

Department/Program: _____ Economics _____ Chair: _____ Jay Hamilton

Degree /Minor/Certificate/or other Program: _____ BS in Economics _____

Time Period Covered for this Assessment Review: _____ 2014-2015 Academic Year _____

Assessment occurred in the following courses:

Course	Semester and Year
<u>Economics 310: Historical Perspectives</u>	<u>Fall 2014</u>
<u>Economics 405: Seminar in Economics (Capstone Class)</u>	<u>Fall 2014</u>

Direct Assessment of Learning Goals (Please attach to the report a copy of each rubric used.)

After listing the learning goal(s), insert *the percentage of students falling into each performance level* in the following chart. Your descriptors for the performance levels may vary, and if they do please substitute yours, but it's important to specify which level "meets expectations" for your program.

Learning Goal(s) Assessed	Course Number	Sample Size	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Identification and Description of Economic Issues	ECO 310	14	71%	21%	7%	0%
Analysis of Economic Information	ECO 310	14	50%	43%	7%	0%
Alternative Perspectives	ECO 310	14	44%	28%	28%	0%
Communicate Effectively	ECO 310	14	43%	29%	28%	0%
Identification and Description of Economic Issues	ECO 405	17	41%	29%	6%	24%
Analysis of Economic Information	ECO 405	17	18%	53%	18%	11%
Alternative Perspectives	ECO 405	17	6%	18%	41%	35%

Policy Recommendation	ECO 405	17	41%	41%	18%	0
Communicate Effectively	ECO 405	17	18%	47%	24%	11%

Indirect Assessment of Learning Goals

Indirect assessment typically relies on surveys (Student Experience Surveys, NSSE, etc.), post-graduate outcome data, graduation and retention rates, grades, and a variety of other data. They may be used to assess particular learning goals or for more global assessment of the program. Indirect assessment should be part of every yearly review as a supplement to the direct assessment of learning. See attachment for examples of direct and indirect instruments.

Learning Goal(s)	Course or Program Based?	Sample Size, if Known	Instrument	Data

Assessment Process How did you go about assessing student learning in your program?

(Describe briefly the assessment methodology: sample selection, assessment instruments, scoring process, and assessment design)

The BS in Economics used two assessment instruments in the 2014-2015 academic year. The first instrument of direct assessment was used in our required ECO 310 course, Economics in Historical Perspectives in the Fall 2014 semester. This instrument measured student learning in four of our five goals: Identification and Description of Economic Issues, Analysis of Economic Information, Alternative Perspectives and Communicate Effectively. In the previous year, we used a two-hundred level course, ECO 225: Intermediate Microeconomics and we did not include the second goal, i.e., the Analysis of Economic Information. However, given that the students in ECO 310 are typically juniors and some seniors, we thought at this level that students would have ample previous classes thus could be assessed on their analyzing skills.

Our second course that we chose to assess is our senior capstone course, *Seminar in Economics*, ECO 405. This is the fifth year that we chose to use this class for direct assessment and used the same format as in previous years. Two sections were assessed in the Fall 2014 semester.

The ECO 310 students were assigned a take home “Response Paper” in which they were required to answer two out of four questions. Students were expected to write 2-3 pages per answer. Given the nature of the assignment, we were able to add the additional analysis goal, because it was one of the assignments requirements. Fourteen students participated in this assessment. See Appendix A.

In ECO 405 classes, as students in previous years did, they were to write in-class essays based current economic phenomena. Specifically, both classes wrote essays based on a New York Times entitled *The Rise of Anti-Capitalism*, from the Opinion Section of the Sunday Review on March 15, 2014, by a much published well known labor economist, Jeremy Rifkin. The students were given the full class time, i.e. 75 minutes to write their essays. This instrument was used not only for the assessment, but also counted for 5% of their final grade. (We assumed that the students would take the assessment instrument more seriously if they received a grade for it.) All five goals were assessed for this course. Seventeen Students participated in this assessment. See Appendix B. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-anti-capitalism.html? r=0>

Conclusions What did you discover about student learning in your program?

There have been some significantly positive results in the level and depth of analysis by our students in the 2014-2015. The John Jay College economics department has been in transition, with a new curriculum and the division of the major, i.e., we no longer have concentrations. The revision to both the department’s structure and its new curriculum that truly takes “scaffolding” seriously, is proving to be successful to date. This became evident by using our newer ECO 310 class as a test case; many of these students, took the newly required ECO 105, *Understanding US Data* and ECO 213, *Political Economy* thus had more opportunities to be critical and learned how to analyze economic phenomena, moreover the student are beginning to understand and use “alternative economic paradigms” that were an issue for us in previous assessments. This was not true though for the seniors in ECO 405. Most, if not all the students entered the major when the previous curriculum was in place. Thus, these students were not required, nor did they take as electives, ECO 105 or ECO 213. Moreover, many of the required courses in the previous curriculum were not economics classes—two accounting classes, a law and evidence class, and a criminal justice class were required, additionally, some of the electives included a significant number of non-economics classes. This is NOT to say that these classes are in anyway trivial, indeed, they continue to be recommended as “free electives,” but we found that some students simply were not receiving enough education in economics classes for sophisticated analyses. We expect that with the new curriculum firmly in place, that this year’s cohorts in our 405 course will have a richer economics education and that we will see a rise in the students who will “meet” or “exceed” our expectations.

We are currently adding a three course quantitative sequence in the major, thus we expect even more levels of analyses and the other four goals to greatly improve in the upcoming years. We are quite optimistic given the results in the 2014/2015 academic year and with the breadth, knowledge, and diversity of expertise, even within our small department. In our last assessment, we thought it would “take a few years for the curriculum changes to have their full impact,” while that is absolutely the case, we are seeing some positive results already.

Actions Taken

What action decisions did you make based on your data and conclusions? (Plan actions to take effect in the following semester or sooner if practical.)

Actions To Be Taken and By Whom	Timeframe for implementation and intermediate steps
We are starting with ECO 105 and the required classes to increase the amount of analyzing, speaking (via presentations) and critical writing skills, including use of the library and the writing workshops. (All faculty)	Immediately

Were last year’s actions implemented as planned? Please explain.

In last year’s assessment, it was noted that Goal 3, *Alternative Perspectives* did not have an effective assessment instrument, we have been working on this and think given the new curriculum and the requirements of 310 and 213 by now more “seasoned” instructors, and will continue to see evidence this year on students’ analyses.

The new curriculum map that reflect the changes in our new curriculum is just about finished. The elective “clusters” may have to be addressed given that the technology does not necessarily correspond with them because some classes are in more than one cluster. But we are working on this and

simply see it as a “snafu” that can be addressed easily.

Given our limited faculty resources and the fact that most of our faculty members are junior non-tenured faculty, they have been quite busy with their own research and new classes, therefore, implementing an adjunct workshop did not come to fruition.

Assessment data and conclusions were discussed in a Department or Program meeting on _____. [date]

Attachments: Please attach rubrics used and samples of student work at each performance level within the rubric.