



ECONOMICS (BS)

Program Learning Assessment

2011-2015 Assessment Planning Cycle Key Findings and Proposed Actions

October 1, 2015

Acknowledgments

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**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
The City University of New York**

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Economics (BS)

Mission

The Economics Major provides an interdisciplinary approach to student comprehension and analysis of economic issues. The curriculum builds student communication skills to improve their effectiveness in the workforce. The major develops students into informed and ethical contributors to global society.

Learning Goals

Graduates in Economics will be able to:

Goal 1: Identify and describe economic issues including, but not limited to: justice, the law, crime, the causes and effects of fraud, sustainability and administration.

Goal 2: Analyze economic information by separating it into its constituent parts, carefully examining them so as to identify causes, relationships and possible results.

Goal 3: Demonstrate an understanding of alternative theoretical perspectives.

Goal 4: Propose ethical and logically consistent remedies/policies for economic problems.

Goal 5: Communicate effectively to a variety of audiences by means of oral presentation, written documents and quantitative graphs, charts and tables.

Assessment Cycle Review

The John Jay College Economics department has radically changed its curriculum in the last few years, making assessment and comparisons somewhat problematic across the years. However, we have made efforts to address the most significant problem area we encountered in the past, i.e., using alternative economic perspectives.

The faculty members in the economics department unanimously agreed that our undergraduate curriculum needed a significant overhaul. We have added a number of classes including three required classes, Understanding Economic Data, Political Economy, and Historical Perspectives in Economics. These courses were added for precisely the reason we believed was deterring students knowledge of alternative economic perspectives or paradigms.

As you can see in our latest findings, the seniors who were not required to take the new curriculum because they began before it was approved and implemented did not fare well in this goal. On the other hand, our students in ECO 310 (Historical Perspectives in Economics) fared much better in this goal. In the senior capstone class, only 6% of the students exceeded expectations and only 18% met the expectations. Conversely, the mostly juniors in the ECO 310

class, did much better; 44% exceeded expectations and 28% met them. Moreover, 35% of the seniors did not meet expectations at all, while no students were in this category in the 310 class.

We are also offering more political economy electives that will also support the students' understanding of a pluralist economics education that we are determined to provide, such as the Political Economy of Gender, ECO 327 (cross-listed with Gender Studies).

The economics department has also zeroed in on another dearth in our curriculum and that is a lack of quantitative classes. We have already had ECO 105, Understanding US Data, approved and running, indeed four of our faculty received the 2014 teaching award for it, they are Michelle Holder, Ian Seda, Mathieu Dufour, and Geert Dhondt. Now we are in the process with the Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee (UCASC) of gaining approval for a new course in Statistics for Economists, and a revised upper-level class in regression analysis.

All the curriculum changes that have been done or in the process are to ensure that our students receive an economics education unlike any other within CUNY and most other colleges and universities. Moreover, the changes will support their future endeavors, whether in a career, or in a graduate program.

This year was the first year that the economics department no longer housed the concentration in fraud analysis, which is now a major in its own right. This split gave us the leeway to be sure that economics majors were required to take more economics classes, rather than accounting as well as in other disciplines. Clearly our juniors have benefited from this requirement, but the seniors did not have that option. It is important to note though, that we have advised many seniors to enroll in more economics classes than required, or if they were in the old "concentration A" (Economic Analysis), we stressed the importance of the newer or revised classes and offered some leeway with course substitutions—especially if the student chose to pursue an economics graduate education.

We expect much more robust results in the future when the department and the curriculum are established. Moreover, given the fact that most of our department faculty are non-tenured, i.e., "junior faculty," they are still growing their research which we are sure with time they will be bringing that into our classrooms and proposing new classes based on their work. For example, we are now contemplating a class in community economic development that will focus on democratic principles and cooperation.

As with anything new, we have had some glitches, particularly in the choice of electives particularly given the computer systems handling of the various "clusters." We are now in discussions about how best to address these problems. At the moment we are handling them one at a time, but as the major grows and as more students take their economics electives, this may become quite onerous.

In summary, we are both pleased and concerned with the results of this year's assessment. Concerned that our seniors did not have the opportunity of a true pluralist economics education as our future students will. We are pleased given the results of the assessment of ECO 310, and believe our new faculty and curriculum while may take some time, will give us positive results.

Economics (BS)

Program Learning Assessment. Key findings and proposed actions
(2011-2015)

Program Learning Goals

1. Identify and describe economic issues including, but not limited to justice, the law, crime, the causes and effects of fraud, sustainability and administration.
2. Analyze economic information by separating it into its constituent parts, carefully examining them so as to identify causes, relationships and possible results.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of alternative theoretical perspectives.
4. Propose ethical and logically consistent remedies/policies for economic problems.
5. Communicate effectively to a variety of audiences by means of oral presentation, written documents and quantitative graphs, charts and tables.

Outcomes Assessment

Program Goal #	% Meet / Exceed ¹	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective? ⁴ Follow-up assessment Sem. Year % Meet / Exceed		
2011						
Assessment Context² : Capstone 405, (n=7), Tool³ : Knowledge Survey for Specializations A and B						
1		Weakness in concepts related to monetary policy. Low scores associated with concepts critical for students to master so they can then demonstrate an understanding of alternative theoretical perspectives (Goal 3).	Increased attention to goal 1 and development of course dedicated to issues of Diversity of Thought. Schedule more full-time faculty to teach intro course (F11). Schedule more full-time faculty to teach ECO 220 (Sp 12).			
Assessment Context : Capstone ECO 405 (n=14), Tool : Essay						
1	93	Learning was weakest in goal 3 (average 53.5%). Poor result stands out because LOs of three required courses (101, 220, 405) contain objectives specific to alternative theoretical perspectives. Result not surprising given lack of recognition of related terms in the knowledge survey.	Propose a 200 level course on Political Economy. Revise a 300 level course on the History of Economic Thought to replace ECO 315 as the required course in Specialization A. Design of elective courses will incorporate LOs to foster greater awareness of the diversity of thought in economics.	Sp 12	88	↓
2	86			Sp 12	88	↑
3	28			Sp 12	0	↓
4	72			Sp 12	95	↑
5	86			Sp 12	94	↑
2012						
Assessment Context : ECO 315 (n=13), Tool : Term Paper Assessment of Written Communication						
5	61.7	Only 15.4% exceeded expectations, far below 40% target.				
Assessment Context : ECO315, Tool : Knowledge Survey Specializations A & B						
1		Recurrent areas of concern. Unsatisfactory performance to self-identify understanding of economic terms/concepts.	Split the BS in Economics into two majors, Economic Justice and Financial Analysis. An aspect of the split will be to add a quantitative dimension to the Economics major. Specialization A & B: In preparation for split, replace Accounting and other courses with more ECO courses. Specialization C: Develop its own assessment plan.			
Assessment Context : ACC410, Tool : Knowledge Survey Specialization C						
1		Moderate improvement. Comp forensics continues the weakest area (2.96 of 5). Course best suited to address weakness, ACC 265, remains an elective in specialization.				

(1) Percent represents ratio of students who met or exceeded expectations. Where scores represent mean performance, the mean score and highest scale value are indicated (e.g., 3.3 out of 4). (2) Assessment context may relate to comprehensive program review, specific academic setting (e.g., course #, capstone, internship), class standing (e.g., seniors, transfers, alumni), post-graduation outcomes (e.g., placement, further education, employers ratings of employee skills), or indicators of learning progress. (3) Examples of tools include exams, portfolios, research projects, lab reports, papers, essays, surveys, licensure tests, performances, presentations. (4) Re-assessment of learning follows the implementation of actions to determine their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes.

Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective?		
				Follow-up assessment Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed	
2012 (cont.)						
Assessment Context : ECO 405, Tool : Essay Exam						
1	88	Faculty particularly please that students performed beyond objectives for goal 4 (71% exceeded in their ability to propose solutions). Failed goal 3 demonstrates continued weakness in program or assessment tool. Essay may try to accomplish too much by assessing all five goals.	Goal 3, Understand alternative theoretical perspectives, shows greatest need for improvement. Proposed curricular changes in 2011 have yet to make an impact on assessment results. Continue curricular reforms, introduce new short-run actions and begin tracking implementation efforts.	Sp 13	75	↓
2	88			Sp 13	63	↓
3	0			Sp 13	0	=
4	95			Sp 13	73	↓
5	94			Sp 13	55	↓
2013						
Assessment Context : ECO 405 (n=11) , Tool : Essay Exam						
1	75	Assessment results continue to show weakness in the same area, Goal 3: the ability of students to identify and analyze issue from alternative economic perspectives.	Workshops for adjuncts instructors of intro and required intermediate courses. Develop better tool to assess performance in goal 3.	Sp 14	95	↑
2	63			Sp 14	84	↑
3	0			Sp 14	58	↑
4	73			Sp 14	89	↑
5	55			Sp 14	79	↑
Assessment Context : ECO 405 (n=8) , Tool : Knowledge Survey						
1		Performance goal not met. Of the 119 terms/concepts, 24 were below the 3.5 cutoff for a 20% performance, far above the 10% objective.	Assess learning in required 200 / 300 level courses (Sp14).			
Assessment Context : ECO Majors (n=85) vs. John Jay Students (n=3715) , Tool : 2012 Student Evaluation of the Major						
<i>ECO Majors</i>						
2	92.9	Major taught to think critically and analytically. Major helped to solve complex real-world problems. Major taught to write clearly and effectively. Major helped to speak clearly and effectively.				
4	85.9					
5 Written	82.4					
5 Oral	78.8					
<i>JJay Students</i>						
2	87.8					
4	78.8					
5 Written	78.6					
5 Oral	75.6					

Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective?		
				Follow-up assessment Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed	
2014						
Assessment Context : ECO 225 (n=26), Tool : Take-home Essay						
1	57	Replaces discontinued knowledge survey in capstone. Assesses ability to identify and describe economic issues and evaluate writing earlier in the program.				
5	70					
Assessment Context : ECO 405 (n=19), Tool : Essay Exam						
1	95	Some positive results which we attribute to our new curriculum. Students are beginning to identify and discuss alternative economic approaches paradigms. Higher performance across all five goals.	Develop instrument to assess performance in goal 3 (Sp 15). Goals and curriculum map need revision to reflect changes in curriculum (Sp 15).		Sp 15	70 ↓
2	84					71 ↓
3	58					24 ↓
4	89					82 ↓
5	79					65 ↓
2015						
Assessment Context : ECO 310 (n=14), Tool : Take-home Essay						
1	92	Significant results in level / depth of analysis. Scaffolding in new curriculum proving to be successful. Many students took new required ECO105 (Understanding US Data) and ECO213 (Political Economy) thus had more opportunities to learn how to analyze economic phenomena.	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 (F15).			
2	93					
3	72					
5	61					
Assessment Context : ECO 405 (n=17), Tool : Essay Exam						
1	70	Most students entered the major when the previous curriculum was in place, thus not required to take ECO 105 and ECO 213. We found some students were not receiving enough education in economic classes for sophisticated analyses. With new curriculum we expect to see a rise in the students who meet or exceed expectations.				
2	71					
3	24					
4	82					
5	65					