

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2007-08 Annual Reports

DEPARTMENT Economics **DATE** March 20, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Mary Askim-Lovseth, Joan Hawthorne

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u>U,G</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u>U,G</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u>U,G</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

Undergraduate: Student learning goals and objectives have been developed and are clear. If you revise the plan at some point (those posted on the University website are for the 2005-06 AY), you might consider rewriting goals for both the undergrad and graduate program so that the goals more explicitly describe what the student knows or can do at the point of graduation – e.g., “Students present the results of their economic studies in writing” could become “Students clearly convey economic information in writing that is comprehensible to a non-specialist reader.” (The change in wording would change the emphasis so it’s not on the TASK that the student does in college but rather on the COMPETENCY that the student takes with him/her into the world.)

Graduate: See comments above.

In addition to the Departmental goals, please also consider UND’s Institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). Use ‘U’ (undergraduate) or ‘G’ (graduate) to identify UND/Essential Studies goals which are similar to the referenced departmental goals.

- U,G 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
U 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
U,G 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
U,G 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding departmental goals and alignment of departmental goals with institutional and Essential Studies goals:

Undergraduate: The Economics Department seems to have especially strong alignment with ES goals for thinking and reasoning-quantitative literacy and written/oral communication. It seems likely that a rewriting of some goals might reveal a strong relationship with thinking and reasoning-critical thinking as well, but that’s less obvious at this point. Although the language used by the Economics Department to describe information literacy does not directly align with ES language about information literacy, there also appears to be a good alignment there.

Graduate: See above.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced? | YES <u>U</u> | NO <u>G</u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? | YES <u> </u> | NO <u>U</u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple | YES <u> </u> | NO <u>U</u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

measures” approach?

Comments:

Undergraduate: Although the assessment plan describes several specific methods, the annual report indicates only a pre/post test and the test is not described as aligned with the department’s own goals.

Graduate: Although the assessment plan describes several specific methods, no assessment activities were reported.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?	YES____	NO_U,G__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	YES____	NO____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	YES____	NO____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• Were the results tied to goals for student learning?	YES____	NO____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

Undergraduate: No results were reported, although there is an indication that a pre/post test of relevant CoBPA learning goals occurred in specified lower division courses. Unfortunately, this assessment likely shed little light on learning of the department’s graduating majors.

Graduate: No assessment activities appear to have been completed.

In addition to departmental goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Use ‘U’ (undergraduate) or ‘G’ (graduate) to identify those results which are applicable to institutional/Essential Studies goal achievement. For indicated items, please describe findings in the appropriate section below. .

- _____ 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
- _____ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
- _____ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
- _____ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
- _____ 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
- _____ 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
- _____ 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
- _____ 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding results and the application of results to departmental, institutional and Essential Studies goals:

Undergraduate:

Graduate:

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?	YES__U__	NO__G__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?	YES_____	NO__U__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

Undergraduate: It appears that “tweaking” of the pre/post test itself occurred as a result of findings in the pilot phase of implementation, but no curricular change was contemplated and the test is not designed to provide information about learning outcome of Economics majors.

Graduate: No activity occurred.

SUMMARY

Strengths

- ☒ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☒ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- ☒ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ☒ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ☐ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- ☐ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- ☐ Results are reported.
- ☐ Results are tied to closing the loop.
- ☐ (Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

Areas for Improvement

- ☐ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ☐ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- ☐ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- ☒ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- ☐ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- ☒ No results are reported.
- ☒ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
- ☐ (Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

[NOTE: Marked items apply to both undergraduate and graduate assessment of learning.]

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Economics Department appears to have been a leader in getting assessment planning in place. Furthermore, the thought that went into both the undergraduate and graduate assessment plan is evident. Unfortunately, it does not appear that any activity took place on graduate program assessment in 2007-08, and the only activity reported at the undergraduate level was in support of the CoBPA core.

The department appears to be well-situated to move on assessment given that approved plans are in place, and we very much would like to see evidence of progress in the 2008-09 annual report.

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Section 1: Y (U,G) Section 2: ? (U,G) Section 3: N (U,G) Section 4: N (U,G)

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information available
- ? = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done