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| **Assurance of Student Learning Report**  **2020-2021** | |
| *Gordon Ford College of Business* | *Economics* |
| *Economics BA 638* | |
| *Dr. Alex Lebedinsky, Chair* | |

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| ***Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages.*** | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome 1:** Students will demonstrate ability to conduct economic research. | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | Direct: Analysis of Capstone Project/Research Paper | | |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate ability to convey their research findings using oral communication. | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | Direct: Capstone Project Poster Presentation | | |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 3:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of microeconomics. | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Microeconomics Exam** | | |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Student Learning Outcome 4:**  Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of macroeconomics. | | | |
| **Instrument 1** | **Direct: Macroeconomics Exam** | | |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 4.** | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)** | | | |
| Two of the four stated goals have been met. Compared with the previous assessment which employed the instruments, there is an improvement on SLO 1 with 76% of students meeting the goal as opposed to 67% during the 2019-2020 academic year. At the same time, performance on SLO2 worsened with 76.5% of the students meeting the goal vs. 86.7 during 2019-2020 academic year. Both of these SLOs are measured in the capstone course which had to be curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan to reassess these SLOs during the next year with the same instruments to examine whether the drop was due to the restrictions stemming from the pandemic or if there is a deeper structural issue. | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 1** | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | Students will demonstrate ability to conduct economic research. | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | DIRECT measures of student learning: Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. One of the requirements of the course is to write a research paper that synthesizes the knowledge obtained in the program. Students choose a research topic, find the relevant data to conduct empirical tests, and perform statistical calculations to answer their research questions. Students are instructed to structure their papers similarly to an economics journal article and include an introduction, literature review, data and methodology section, analysis of empirical results, and a conclusion.  Papers are evaluated on the following criteria:  1. Did a student formulate an appropriate research question grounded in economic theory?  2. Does the paper contain an adequate literature review?  3. Did the student employ appropriate data to test the hypothesis?  4. Did the student correctly interpret the findings in the paper? | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | At the end of the program, students should be able to perform at the level of Capstone (4) or Milestone (3) according to *LEAP Inquiry and Analysis* rubric. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | 80% or more students should meet the criteria for student success outlined above | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 76% (13/17) | |
| **Methods** | Direct artifacts were collected from all students in the senior assessment course (ECON 499). The data cover the entire population of 2020-21 graduates of the program (N=2 in the fall of 2020 and N=15 in the spring of 2021). The papers were evaluated by three economics faculty on the four criteria listed above using a 1-4 scale for each criterion. The scores were assigned based *on LEAP Inquiry and Analysis* rubric items (1) Topic Selection, (2) Existing Knowledge, Research and/or Views, (3) Design Process, and (4) Analysis. The rubric is attached below. Using this rubric, each evaluator produced an average score for each paper by computing a simple average of the four items in the rubric. Therefore, each paper received three scores – one from each evaluator – and the mean of these three scores was computed for each student. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| The data collected during the assessment indicated that students did well on the first two criteria – Topic Selection and Existing Knowledge and Research – with 82% of the student achieving the goal on those items. Students didn’t perform as well on the Design Process (77% achieved the goal) and Analysis (65%). We will continue to emphasize development of analytical skills in out research methods class (ECON 465 – Regression and Econometrics) as well as integrating examples of economic research in upper-level classes. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| At this point in time, no immediate changes to the curriculum are planned. COVID-19 pandemic likely had an effect on students’ performance: This class is designed to have a lot of one-on-one interactions and individual faculty guidance on students’ projects, which was difficult to do due to social distancing. If the problem continues to persist during the 2021-2022 assessment cycle, the curriculum map will be reviewed to determine whether some of the analytical skills need to be introduced earlier in the program and reinforced in the ECON 465 course so that students are better prepared to tackle research projects during their Senior Assessment class.  No changes to the assessment instruments are planned as they provide us with valuable diagnostics of where students not meeting the goals of the program. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** | | | | | |
| We plan to continue using the same assessment method as it yields consistent and informative data which allows us to track progress and make adjustments. | | | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 2** | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | Students will demonstrate ability to convey their research findings using oral communication | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | DIRECT measures of student learning outcomes: Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During that course, students are required to write a paper and present it to the economics faculty. The presentations are structured as a mini-conference with each student giving a poster presentation. Each student is required to prepare a poster, deliver a brief summary of his or her paper, and answer follow-up questions. The presentations are evaluated on the following criteria:  1. Was the information organized well on the poster?  2. Did the student follow good practices when designing the poster?  3. Did the student present the material well? | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | At the end of the program, students should be able to perform at the level of Capstone (4) or Milestone (3) according to LEAP *Oral Communication* rubric. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | 80% or more students should meet the criteria for student success outlined above | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 76.5% (13/17) | |
| **Methods** | Normally, the data are based on direct observations of poster presentations. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the student conference could not take place, so each student recorded his or her presentation. Three faculty members served as the assessment committee tasked with evaluating all of the recorded presentations to ensure consistency of measurement.  Students’ presentations were rated on the three criteria listed above using a 1-4 scale for each criterion. The scores were assigned based on LEAP *Oral Communication* rubric items (1) Organization, (2) Supporting Material, (3) and Language. The rubric is attached below. Using this rubric, each evaluator produced an average score for each presentation by computing a simple average of the three items of the rubric, with each student receiving three scores – one from each evaluator – and the mean of these three score was computed was computed for each student. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| The data reveal that during this assessment cycle, the program was just shy of meeting the goal. While 83% of the students had well designed supporting materials (presentation slides), not all relevant information was effectively organized and delivery of presentations fell short of the goal. As with many other aspects, COVID could have played a role in this because recorded video presentations were a big shift from a typical medium – the poster presentations.  No immediate action is planned other than continuing to emphasize presentation skills in the Senior Assessment course. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| Performance on this learning outcome could have been affected by COVID. Normally, students have a number of one-on-one meeting sharing their research results with faculty and discussing how to present them. During 2021-2022, there were much fewer of these interactions, so students didn’t receive as much coaching on how to present their research results. No changes are planned during the next assessment cycle, but if the problem persists, it will be addressed in the Senior Assessment Seminar by placing greater focus on developing presentations skills. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** | | | | | |
| We plan to continue using the same assessment method as it yields consistent and informative data which allows us to track progress and make adjustments.  If the social distancing restrictions are lifted, during 2021-22 academic year, this SLO will be measured using a face-to-face poster session instead of recorded presentations. | | | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 3** | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of microeconomics. | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | DIRECT measures of student learning: Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During the course, students have two take two exams – a microeconomics exam and a macroeconomics exam. The exams used in the class have been developed by the National Council for Economic Education (NCEE). These exams were designed with two objectives in mind: “(1)… to offer a reliable and valid assessment instrument for students in principles of economics curses; and (2) to provide norming data for large national sample of students in principles classes…”. The exams cover a range of economic topics and can serve as a good measure not only of the attainment of knowledge in the principles courses but also as a measure of retention and reinforcement of that knowledge throughout the program. | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | At the end of the program students should perform at the 70th percentile or higher compared to the national sample of economics principles students. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | 75% of the students | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 76.5% | |
| **Methods** | The test used as an instrument is the Test of Understanding of College Economics (TUCE), developed by NCEE in conjunction with the American Economic Association. The tests cover a range of topics normally covered in a microeconomics principles course as well as in the rest of the upper-level courses of a typical economics program. The test consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. Based on the national sample of 3,255 college and university students who took these tests the score of 14 corresponds to a 67-th percentile and a score of 15 corresponds to 74th percentile. The tests were administered to all of the students in the senior assessment seminar.  Out of 17 students who took the exam, 13 students scored 15 points or higher, which amounts to 76.5% of all students. The average score was 18.05. While the goal was met, during the last assessment cycle, the percentage of students who scored above 15 points was 79.17%, so, while not statistically significant, the difference suggests that pandemic might have affected students’ performance. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| The students in the program are currently performing at the national average.  We will continue to monitor performance during the next assessment cycle. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| Continue to monitor students’ performance during on the microeconomic exam.  Use the fall 2021 assessment class as a mid-cycle gauge. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | |
| No changes are planned in the assemsnet mechanism. The exam provides a consistent and robust tool for measuring student performance.  The exams will be administered again during the fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters. | | | | | |

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| **Student Learning Outcome 4** | | | | | |
| **Student Learning Outcome** | Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of microeconomics. | | | | |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | DIRECT measures of student learning: Students in the Economics major (638) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During the course, students have two take two exams – a microeconomics exam and a macroeconomics exam. The exams used in the class have been developed by the National Council for Economic Education (NCEE). These exams were designed with two objectives in mind: “(1)… to offer a reliable and valid assessment instrument for students in principles of economics curses; and (2) to provide norming data for large national sample of students in principles classes…”. The exams cover a range of economic topics and can serve as a good measure not only of the attainment of knowledge in the principles courses but also as a measure of retention and reinforcement of that knowledge throughout the program. | | | | |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | At the end of the program students should perform at the 70th percentile or higher compared to the national sample of economics principles students. | | | | |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | | 75% of the students | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | 76.5% | |
| **Methods** | The test used as an instrument is the Test of Understanding of College Economics (TUCE), developed by NCEE in conjunction with the American Economic Association. The tests cover a range of topics normally covered in a macroeconomics principles course as well as in the rest of the upper-level courses of a typical economics program. The test consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. Based on the national sample of 3,255 college and university students who took these tests the score of 16 is the 69th percentile and 17th is 74th percentile. The tests were administered to all of the students in the senior assessment seminar.  The results were the same as the microeconomics test in SLO 3: Out of 17 students who took the exam, 13 students scored 15 points or higher, which amounts to 76.5% of all students. The average score was 18.35. While the goal was met, during the last assessment sycle, the percentage of students who scored above 16 points was 87.5%. It’s not clear whether the drop can be attributed to pandemic but to other factors. | | | | |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | | | | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Actions** (Describe the decision-making process and actions for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) | | | | | |
| The students in the program are currently performing at the national average.  We will continue to monitor performance during the next assessment cycle. | | | | | |
| **Follow-Up** (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) | | | | | |
| Continue to monitor students’ performance during on the microeconomic exam.  Use the fall 2021 assessment class as a mid-cycle gauge. | | | | | |
| **Next Assessment Cycle Plan** (Please describe your assessment plan timetable for this outcome) | | | | | |
| No changes are planned in the assemsnet mechanism. The exam provides a consistent and robust tool for measuring student performance.  The exams will be administered again during the fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters. | | | | | |

Rubric for SLO 1

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|  | **Capstone** | **Milestones** | | **Benchmark** |
|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **Topic selection** *LEAP Inquiry and Analysis* | Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously lessexplored aspects of the topic. | Identifies a focused and  manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic. | Identifies a topic that while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic. | Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable. |
| **Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views** *LEAP Inquiry and Analysis* | Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches. | Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches. | Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches. | Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches. |
| **Design Process** *LEAP Inquiry and Analysis* | All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized from across disciplines or from relevant subdisciplines. | Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for. | Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused. | Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework . |
| **Analysis** *LEAP Inquiry and Analysis* | Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus. | Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus. | Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities. | Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/or is unrelated to focus. |

Rubric for SLO 2

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|  | **Capstone** | **Milestones** | | **Benchmark** |
|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **Organization** *LEAP Oral Communication* | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive. | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation. | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation. | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation. |
| **Language** *LEAP Oral Communication* | Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience. |
| **Supporting Material** *LEAP Oral Communication* | A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or  analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. |