



Student Learning Assessment Report, Academic

Report Year

Program

Department Head

Submitted By

Previously Submitted Reports

Mission

The mission of the Economics Department at Siena College is to educate undergraduate students in a learning environment that emphasizes both mainstream and heterodox approaches to economics, as well as principles of economic justice related to Siena's Franciscan tradition. The Economics Department offers a curriculum that is taught critically and comparatively to promote inquiry and intellectual growth for students, department faculty, and the campus community. The B.A. offers students the opportunity to focus on the relationship between economics and society, while the B.S. requires training in functional areas of business.

Assessment

1. Major/Program Student Learning Outcomes

Student will be able to...

Concept Mastery: Demonstrate mastery in central concepts of mainstream and heterodox approaches to economics – econometrics and both micro- and macro- economic theory.

2. Phase

Check all that apply

- Planning/ determining procedure
- Planning/ Redesigning based on past assessment
- Collecting/ analyzing assessment data
- Discussing/ using result
- Determining if Changes had an Impact on Student Learning
- Objective not assessed this year

3. Assessment Procedures (Planning/ determining)

Method: (ex. tests, presentations, research paper, describe the assessment course and student sample when it is applicable, etc.)

When does assessment occur?

How often does assessment occur?

Criteria (How do you know students are achieving learning outcome?)

Exceed > 89 percent

Meet 70 – 89 percent

Does not meet - all evaluated work averaged < 70 percent

80% of students to meet or exceed expectations

4. Assessment Results (Collecting/ analyzing, please identify the sample size and course number when appropriate)

89.3 percent of the students met or exceeded the criteria

- 5 of 28 students exceeded the criteria (17.9 percent)

- 20 of 20 students met the criteria (71.4 percent)

- 3 of 20 students did not meet the criteria (10.7 percent)

Learning Outcome Met? (Based on Criteria)

Yes

5. Use of Results (Discussing/ using results)

The results from 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 were disappointing. The results from 2022-2023 were even more problematic. On the surface, it would appear that concept mastery has remained the same, but that would be misleading. To meet the criteria on evaluated work, a student needs to average in the 70-89 percent range. In the last few years, exam averages were roughly 80 percent, but in 2022-2023 academic year, exam averages were closer to 72 percent. Students still met the criteria, but it is clear that overall performance is trending in the wrong direction. What was written last year is still very relevant. Coming into ECON 430, both math and statistics skills were weak, and computer skills were problematic. Knowledge of EXCEL was almost non-existent for many students. These are hurdles that make the course material in ECON 430 that much more difficult, and many students struggled all semester. There is little doubt that this is pandemic related. Taking math and basic statistics classes remotely left many students unprepared for more advanced, applied work.

The "micro" Vs. "macro" distinction can be inferred from the data set students used in their projects.

6. Determining if changes impacted student learning

This has been an ongoing discussion within the economics department, and several strategies have been raised to address these concerns. Unfortunately, many of the strategies that hold the most promise of being effective would require significant additional resources and a rethinking of core classes. Further we have discussed the problem of prerequisites – ECON 430 is required of ECON BA and BS students, as well as Actuarial Science Majors, and each of these groups has markedly different academic expectations heading into ECON 430. Both knowledge of excel and upper level economic theory varies from student to student, and makes both effective teaching and learning difficult. Some of the issues will undoubtedly resolve themselves as we move further away from the pandemic and remote core classes, but some will not. There are also questions that have been raised regarding the timing of ECON 430. As a capstone course, it works best for seniors, and both sophomores and juniors have sometimes struggled because of their inexperience. But the skills learned in ECON 430, particularly concept mastery, would be invaluable if they were acquired earlier in a student's career so that they could be used in other classes.

Assessment

1. Major/Program Student Learning Outcomes

Student will be able to...

Inquiry. Provide critical and comparative inquiry through engagement with texts, models, and data. Includes critical thinking, problem solving, and data analysis.

2. Phase

Check all that apply

- Planning/ determining procedure
- Planning/ Redesigning based on past assessment
- Collecting/ analyzing assessment data
- Discussing/ using result
- Determining if Changes had an Impact on Student Learning
- Objective not assessed this year

3. Assessment Procedures (Planning/ determining)

Method: (ex. tests, presentations, research paper, describe the assessment course and student sample when it is applicable, etc.)

Semester long, individual projects as well as in class assignments.

When does assessment occur?

Fall 2022

How often does assessment occur?

Every year

Criteria (How do you know students are achieving learning outcome?)

Exceed – A on the project

Meet – A- to B- on the project

Does not meet – C+ and below on the project

80% of students to meet or exceed expectations.

4. Assessment Results (Collecting/ analyzing, please identify the sample size and course number when appropriate)

96.4 percent of the students met or exceeded the criteria

- 14 of 28 students exceeded the criteria (50 percent)
- 13 of 28 students met the criteria (46.4 percent)
- 1 of 28 student did not meet the criteria (3.6 percent)

Learning Outcome Met? (Based on Criteria)

Yes

5. Use of Results (Discussing/ using results)

This outcome, inquiry, showed tremendous improvement from previous years. Students were very willing to take data and explore what that data might reveal using various computer models and techniques. Being creative – thinking outside the box – was noticeable. While technical skills (concept mastery) was weak, collecting data and building models to test that data (inquiry) were strong. The "micro" Vs. "macro" distinction can be inferred from the data sets students used in their analyses.

6. Determining if changes impacted student learning

More frequent discussions with students in small groups seems helpful.

Assessment

1. Major/Program Student Learning Outcomes

Student will be able to...

Policy analysis. Analyze policy with respect to mainstream and heterodox approaches to economics, and principles of economic justice related to Siena's Franciscan tradition.

2. Phase

Check all that apply

- Planning/ determining procedure
- Planning/ Redesigning based on past assessment
- Collecting/ analyzing assessment data
- Discussing/ using result
- Determining if Changes had an Impact on Student Learning
- Objective not assessed this year

3. Assessment Procedures (Planning/ determining)

Method: (ex. tests, presentations, research paper, describe the assessment course and student sample when it is applicable, etc.)

Semester long, individual projects as well as in class assignments.

When does assessment occur?

Fall 2022

How often does assessment occur?

Every year

Criteria (How do you know students are achieving learning outcome?)

Exceed – policy component of projects and in class assignments > 90 percent

Meet – policy component of projects and in class assignments 70 – 90 percent

Does not meet – policy component of projects and in class assignments < 70

80% of students to meet or exceed expectations

4. Assessment Results (Collecting/ analyzing, please identify the sample size and course number when appropriate)

89.3 percent of the students met or exceeded the criteria

- 14 of 28 students exceeded the criteria (50 percent)
- 11 of 28 students met the criteria (39.3 percent)
- 3 of 28 students did not meet the criteria (10.7 percent)

Learning Outcome Met? (Based on Criteria)

Yes

5. Use of Results (Discussing/ using results)

As mentioned last year, students seem to have a heightened interest in both U.S. and world events. In regard to economic justice and Siena's Franciscan tradition, assignments were given that directly challenged students to think about poverty, welfare, and immigration. By any measure, these were very successful in motivating class discussion and influencing topics chosen for final projects. As for heterodox versus mainstream thinking in economics, building sophisticated computer models is not the usual research method chosen by heterodox economists, who often engage in more qualitative analysis of data. But this learning outcome occurs during class discussion and individual meetings with students to discuss their project proposals. These discussions focus on the limitations of quantitative methodology, and the problem of generalization as it relates to policy. In addition, there are a few exam questions that ask about heterodox thinking, but these are very narrow and relate to economic research rather than policy in general.

6. Determining if changes impacted student learning

Econ 430 does not use formal rubric. The final project is a big part of the assessment and it involves several one to one discussions with the professor.

Assessment

1. Major/Program Student Learning Outcomes

Student will be able to...

Communication. Demonstrate intellectual growth by communicating through use of specific relevant economic data, reasoning, and appropriate professional terms.

2. Phase

Check all that apply

- Planning/ determining procedure
- Planning/ Redesigning based on past assessment
- Collecting/ analyzing assessment data
- Discussing/ using result
- Determining if Changes had an Impact on Student Learning
- Objective not assessed this year

3. Assessment Procedures (Planning/ determining)

Method: (ex. tests, presentations, research paper, describe the assessment course and student sample when it is applicable, etc.)

Project proposals, which must be submitted in writing and defended orally

When does assessment occur?

Fall 2022

How often does assessment occur?

Every year

Criteria (How do you know students are achieving learning outcome?)

Exceed – project proposal is accepted as is with no changes

Meet - project proposal is accepted with some necessary revisions

Does not meet – project proposal is rejected and subject to complete rewrite

80% to meet or exceed expectations

4. Assessment Results (Collecting/ analyzing, please identify the sample size and course number when appropriate)

89.3 percent of the students met or exceeded the criteria

- 5 of 28 students exceeded the criteria (17.8 percent)

- 20 of 28 students met the criteria (71.5 percent)

- 3 of 28 students did not meet the criteria (10.7 percent)

Learning Outcome Met? (Based on Criteria)

Yes

5. Use of Results (Discussing/ using results)

Writing skills were again strong, but oral communication skills were not. There is no metric used in making the latter statement, but students routinely present (informally) research findings, and they often struggled to clearly communicate using technical terminology. It should be noted that AI is now a reality, and moving forward, students in ECON 430 will be required to use it as a tool. Much of the focus on AI by academics has been the possibility of cheating. This focus is misplaced. Students who have experience with AI will have enhanced opportunities in the job market, and it can be a powerful tool for research and developing hypotheses if used correctly. This may make written communication, which is already strong, even stronger. As for oral communication, some of that is likely due to the pandemic and learning in isolation, and some is due to a lack of confidence, which is a notable weakness for Siena students in general. AI is not likely to help with oral communication skills, and there is currently no strategy on the table to help with this, although it is on the agenda for future discussion.

6. Determining if changes impacted student learning

Discussions are still going on in the department on issues related to curriculum.

Package History

Date	User	Action
10/14/2023 10:45:13 PM	Elias Shukralla	Submitted 'Student Learning Assessment Report'
10/14/2023 10:46:10 PM	School of Business - Dean	Received
10/14/2023 10:46:10 PM	Joseph McCollum	Received
10/14/2023 10:46:10 PM	School of Science - Asst. Dean	Received
10/14/2023 10:46:10 PM	School of Business - Asst. Dean	Received
10/14/2023 10:46:11 PM	Provost and Senior Vice President	Received
10/14/2023 10:46:11 PM	Ashley Provencher	Received
10/14/2023 10:46:11 PM	Institutional Effectiveness	Received
10/16/2023 9:03:22 AM	Margaret Madden	Decision Approved on step 'Provost and Senior Vice President'