

**Assurance of Student Learning
2018-2019**

Gordon Ford College of Business

Economics

Business Economics 724

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 and to communicate their findings using written communication.

Instrument 1 | **Direct: Analysis of Capstone Project/Research Paper**

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate ability to convey research ideas and findings using oral communication and appropriate visual aids.

Instrument 1 | **Direct: Capstone Project Poster Presentation**

Based on your results, circle or highlight 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 micro- and macroeconomics.

Instrument 1 | **Direct: Microeconomics Exam**

Instrument 2 | **Direct: Macroeconomics Exam**

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 4: Students learn about career opportunities and how to conduct job search.

Instrument 1 | **Direct: Analysis of Resume**

Instrument 2 | **Direct: Job Search Assignment**

Instrument 3 | **Direct: Mock Interview**

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.

Met

Not Met

Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)

The results of the assessment indicated that there is a shortfall in the attainment of the SLO 1 – Written Communications. Specifically, the students struggled with the analytical part of the research paper they had to write in their capstone course as well as interpretation of their results.

Two changes have been implemented in the program:

- 1) Students now have to start working on their capstone project earlier in the program.
- 2) Faculty will be more closely monitoring and mentoring the students on their projects.

Student Learning Outcome 1

Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate ability to conduct economic research and to communicate their findings using <u>written communication</u> .		
Measurement Instrument 1	<p>DIRECT measures of student learning: Students in the Business Economics major (724) 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.</p> <p>Papers are evaluated on the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <i>Inquiry and Analysis</i> rubric.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80% or more	Percent of Program Achieving Target	73.7%
Methods	Direct artifacts were collected from all students in the senior assessment course (ECON 499). The data cover the entire population of 2018-19 graduates of the program (N=0 in the fall of 2018 and N=19 in the spring of 2019). 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 <i>Inquiry and Analysis</i> rubric items (1) Topic Selection, (2) Existing Knowledge, Research and/or Views, (3) Design Process, and (4) Analysis. 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 score was computed for each student.		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.		Met	Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 2

Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate ability to convey research ideas and findings using <u>oral</u> communication and appropriate visual aids.		
Measurement Instrument 1	<p>DIRECT measures of student learning outcomes: Students in the Business Economics major (724) 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <i>Oral Communication</i> rubric.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80% or more	Percent of Program Achieving Target	84.2%
Methods	The data are based on direct observations of the poster presentations. The data were collected from all students in the senior assessment course (ECON 499). The data cover the entire population of 2018-19 graduates of the program (N=0 in the fall of 2018 and N=19 in the spring of 2019). Three faculty members served as the assessment committee tasked with evaluating all of the poster 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 <i>Oral Communication</i> rubric items (1) Organization, (2) Supporting Material, (3) and Language. 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 for each student.		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.		Met	Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 3

Student Learning Outcome	Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of micro- and macroeconomics.				
Measurement Instrument 1	DIRECT measures of student learning: Students in the Business Economics major (724) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During the course, students have to 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 courses; 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 70 th percentile or higher compared to the national sample of economics principles students.				
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80% or more on each subject	Percent of Program Achieving Target	Micro - 89.47% Score >15 Macro – 78.95% Score >16		
Methods	The tests used as the instrument are 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 the principles courses as well as in the rest of the upper-level courses of a typical economics program. Both micro- and macroeconomics tests consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. Based on the national sample of 3,255 college and university students who took these tests, for the microeconomics test, the score of 14 corresponds to a 67 th percentile and a score of 15 corresponds to 74 th percentile. For the macroeconomics test, the score of 16 is the 69 th percentile and 17 th is 74 th percentile. The tests were administered to all of the students in the senior assessment seminar.				
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.			<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; border: none;">Met</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: none;">Not Met</td> </tr> </table>	Met	Not Met
Met	Not Met				

Student Learning Outcome 4

Student Learning Outcome	Students will learn about career opportunities in economics and how to conduct job search.		
Measurement Instrument 1	Direct: Analysis of Resume. Students in the Business Economics major (724) are required to complete a capstone course at the end of the program. During that course, students have to complete a series of assignments targeted at increasing their success on the job market, and one of these assignments was to create a resume.		
Criteria for Student Success	Students should be able to compile a professional resume that is rated 4 or 5.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80% or more	Percent of Program Achieving Target	78.9%
Methods	Resumes were collected from each of the students in the class and assessed by the course instructor for content, clarity, and quality of presentation. The quality of resumes was rated on the scale of 1(lowest) to 5(highest). The rating of 5 represents a resume that is ready to be used in the job search without any changes. The rating of 4 represents a resume that is reading for a job search with minor changes.		
Measurement Instrument 2	Direct: Job Search Assignment. During the capstone course, students are required to complete an assignment where they have to find 10 jobs for which they should be qualified. To complete the assignments, students have to create a matrix listing the job titles, company names, job descriptions, experience requirements, minimum qualifications, and educational requirements.		
Criteria for Student Success	The objective of this assignment is to measure students' ability to find job opportunities that match their skills.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80% or more jobs should be within the qualification set (min score of 4 out of 5)	Percent of Program Achieving Target	73.7%
Methods	Assignments were collected from each of the students in the class and assessed by the course instructor. Students' resumes were matched to job descriptions to assess how well students' qualifications meet those of the jobs. The score was assigned based on how well the students conducted the job search: If all 10 jobs were within the students' qualification set, they received a score of 5, if nine jobs matched, then the score was 4.5 etc.		
Measurement Instrument 3	Direct: Mock Interview. During the capstone course, they students are required to conduct a mock interview with the one of the staff members of the Center for Career and Professional Development. The interviewer provides a ranking of students' professionalism, preparedness, general interview questions, and specific job questions.		
Criteria for Student Success	Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to conduct a job interview by attaining a score of 40 or higher (out of 50 possible points) on their mock interview assessment.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	80% or more	Percent of Program Achieving Target	73.7%
Methods	Prior to the interview, students are given information about a fictitious job at a real company. When they arrive to the interview, they are expected to dress professionally, bring their resumes, and to be able to demonstrate knowledge of the company and the job requirements of this position. During the interview, the interviewer ranks students' performance on the scale from 0 to 50. The score is determined based on specific measurable characteristics or actions such as "Arrived ahead of time", "Supporting documents are organized and presented in a professional manner" etc.		

Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)

Using the data on the individual items from the rubric for SLO1, two areas in need of improvement have been identified: (1) The econometric techniques used to conduct the data analysis are sometimes used incorrectly; (2) The results presented in the paper were not interpreted either incompletely or incorrectly. The Economics department re-examined the sequence of the courses in the program and the content of the Regression and Econometrics course (ECON 465), which is a key research methods course and a pre-requisite for ECON 499, and in the fall of 2019 started requiring students in ECON 465 to develop a paper topic for their senior assessment project. This forces the students to spend more time developing and refining their research idea as they have to come up with the topic for their capstone project *before* the start of the capstone course. The faculty members in the department will be playing a more active role in mentoring students on their project, including topic selection as well as other aspects of the student's research project such as data collection and statistical analysis.

While overall the students performed well on the career assignment, there is room for improvement in the resume preparation and job search. To address inadequate performance on the resume assignment, the assignment will be scheduled earlier in the semester in the ECON 499 class, then the students whose resumes are rated below 4 will be required to seek advice on their resumes from the Center for Career and Professional Development and the follow up assessment will be required. Low performance on the job search assignment will be addressed in the similar way, but instead of seeking advice from the Center for Career and Professional Development, the students will be required to do a follow-up assignment with the instructor of the ECON 499 course. These changes will be implemented during the spring 2020 semester.

Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)

Preliminary data from the fall 2019 semester indicate that the changes in the capstone project may have resulted in an improvement. However, due to the small sample of students in the Business Economics (N=5), these results are not necessarily indicative of overall improvement. At the end of the 2019-20 academic year, graduating seniors will be assessed on the same criteria and a more detailed picture will emerge.