

**Assurance of Student Learning  
2018-2019**

Gordon Ford College of Business

Economics

Economic 638

**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**

**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**

<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	Students will demonstrate ability to conduct economic research and to communicate their findings using <u>written communication</u> .		
<b>Measurement Instrument 1</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Papers are evaluated on the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did a student formulate an appropriate research question grounded in economic theory?</li> <li>2. Does the paper contain an adequate literature review?</li> <li>3. Did the student employ appropriate data to test the hypothesis?</li> <li>4. Did the student correctly interpret the findings in the paper?</li> </ol>		
<b>Criteria for Student Success</b>	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.		
<b>Program Success Target for this Measurement</b>	80% or more	<b>Percent of Program Achieving Target</b>	67%
<b>Methods</b>	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=13 in the fall of 2018 and N=17 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.		
<b>Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.</b>		<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>

### Student Learning Outcome 2

<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	Students will demonstrate ability to convey research ideas and findings using <u>oral</u> communication and appropriate visual aids.		
<b>Measurement Instrument 1</b>	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Was the information organized well on the poster?</li> <li>2. Did the student follow good practices when designing the poster?</li> <li>3. Did the student present the material well?</li> </ol>		
<b>Criteria for Student Success</b>	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.		
<b>Program Success Target for this Measurement</b>	80% or more	<b>Percent of Program Achieving Target</b>	86.7%
<b>Methods</b>	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=13 in the fall of 2018 and N=17 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.		
<b>Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.</b>		<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>

### Student Learning Outcome 3

<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles of micro- and macroeconomics.		
<b>Measurement Instrument 1</b>	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 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.		
<b>Criteria for Student Success</b>	At the end of the program students should perform at the 70 <sup>th</sup> percentile or higher compared to the national sample of economics principles students.		
<b>Program Success Target for this Measurement</b>	80% or more on each subject	<b>Percent of Program Achieving Target</b>	Micro - 83.8% Score >15 Macro - 80.6% Score >16
<b>Methods</b>	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 <sup>th</sup> percentile and a score of 15 corresponds to 74 <sup>th</sup> percentile. For the macroeconomics test, the score of 16 is the 69 <sup>th</sup> percentile and 17 <sup>th</sup> is 74 <sup>th</sup> percentile. The tests were administered to all of the students in the senior assessment seminar.		
<b>Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.</b>		<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
<b>Actions</b> (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 <i>before</i> 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.			
<b>Follow-Up</b> (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 may have resulted in an improvement. However, due to the small sample of students (N=7), 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.			