

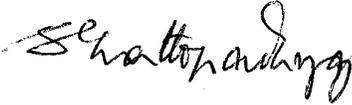
**Memorandum**

**To:** Linda Buckley  
AVP, Academic Affairs

**From:** Sudip Chattopadhyay, Chair  
Economics Department

**Date:** February 21, 2014

**Re:** 2011-12 Economics Assessment Report



---

Attached is the Economics Department Assessment Report for the 2011-12 academic year. An electronic version has been emailed to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Assessment as well as the Dean of the College of Business.

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

**LINKING ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**  
**BA ECONOMICS**

**I. PROGRAM**

B.A. in Economics

**II. PROGRAM MISSION**

The Economics Department at San Francisco State University seeks to prepare each student to effectively participate as an informed citizen in the affairs of our society, and to contribute productively in their careers using knowledge learned during their study of economics. The department assists its students in acquiring knowledge of current modes of economic thought central to the discipline of economics, as well as in developing an understanding of the role played by economic institutions in our society. In addition, the Economics Department helps its students master the ability to collect, process, and draw conclusions from economic information, as well as an ability to effectively communicate economic ideas both orally and in writing. These goals are achieved on a continuing basis through formal classroom and laboratory instructions, economics seminars organized on a regular basis, as well as informal interaction between students and Economics faculty members.

**III. PROGRAM GOALS**

Students graduating with a B.A. in Economics should be able to use economic theory and methods to explain economic phenomenon, analyze economic problems, and evaluate economic policy solutions. They are expected to learn how to collect quantitative economic information, process it using rigorous modeling techniques, and draw conclusions from it. They should be able to effectively communicate economic ideas in writing and through verbal communication.

**IV. ASSESSING STUDENT ATTAINMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The department's assessment plan focuses on assessing how well students can synthesize and apply materials learned in our capstone, senior seminar course, Econ 690 offered in both Fall and Spring semesters. This course is required for all our majors.

**Overall Student Learning Outcomes in Economics**

Professor Michael Potapan, who has been teaching this class on a regular basis since fall of 2007, collected data on overall student learning outcomes in our capstone senior seminar course, Econ 690 – Economic Inquiry and Analysis. This course is designed to see how well economics majors are able to master general concepts and methods in the economics discipline.

He assessed how many students in his class were able to master specific learning objectives linked to learning goals identified in the department's assessment plan. He grouped students into three broad categories according to how well they mastered a particular learning objective:

Fully mastered the objective  
Partially mastered the objective  
Did not master the objective

### **Broad Student Learning Objectives**

The following specific objectives were developed by the department and were linked to specific assessment in Economics 690:

1. Students can intelligently analyze a particular public policy issue that is presented to them (e.g.: impact of CAFÉ standard on auto emission, Macroeconomic forecasts, the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy to address home value appreciation, etc.) using conventional economic reasoning.
2. Students can identify and explain the importance of various economic institutions such as the Federal, State, and the local governments in general, Federal Reserve, the International Monetary Fund, trade unions and the AFL-CIO, trade and industry associations, etc.
3. Students can collect economic data from the various sources, such as the library, the Internet, governmental agencies, international organizations, process the data into a form that conveys meaningful economic information, analyze that data using standard economic and econometric techniques, and draw conclusions from their analysis of the data.
4. Students can speak clearly and in an organized manner before peers, instructors, strangers in effectively communicating economic ideas.
5. Students can write clearly and in an organized manner to effectively convey economic ideas.

All students in the course are given assignments that were linked to the above five objectives. The course instructor determines how many students are able to fully master, partially master, or not master each of the learning objectives. The findings are shown in the tables below. We note that the results compare well with most of the learning objectives over the previous year. However, students' "Written Presentation", shows remarkable improvement this year with 68% mastered compared to only 42% mastered in 2010 – 11. Like in 2010 - 11, the test of the students' verbal presentation skills –either individual or group presentation - was not conducted in 2011 – 12 due to lack of resources. In the future offerings of the capstone course, we plan to discontinue individual or group oral presentations until the resource situation becomes better.

**Inventory of Program Assessment Activities for Academic Year 2011 - 2012**

This grid offers a model for simplifying departmental assessment endeavors on an annual basis as part of a cycle of academic program review or accreditation. The program’s assessment plan should be structured in such a way as to assess all of the program’s key learning objectives in the time period between program review or accreditations by concentrating on a subset of objectives each year.

On the grid, the first column identifies **all** of the key learning objectives anticipated for students completing the program. The second column lists the year a particular objective was or will be assessed. The third column indicates the strategies employed in a given academic year to assess student attainment of that subset of objectives chosen for review that year. The fourth and fifth columns summarize the results of the year’s assessment endeavors and show how those results are being used to enhance program quality.

**College:**            **Business**

**Program:**     Economics    , **Degree**     B.A.          **Date:** **February 21, 2014**

**[Create a separate inventory for each degree, program, and concentration.]**

<b>Key Learning Objectives for this Program</b>	<b>Academic Year Objective was/will be Assessed</b>	<b>Methods/Strategies Used to Assess Given Year’s Chosen Objectives</b>	<b>Summary of Findings About Student Learning</b>	<b>Use of Findings to Enhance Program Quality</b>
1. Analyze Public Policy Issues	2011-12	Assessment exam given to graduating seniors in Econ 690	43% mastered 40% partially mastered 17% did not master	More emphasis on Federal tax structure in Econ 302 and Econ 505.
2. Explain Economic Institutions	2011-12	Assessment exam given to graduating seniors in Econ 690	33% mastered 45% partially mastered 22% did not master	Cover role of Congressional Budget Office in Econ 302 and Econ 560.
3. Collect, Analyze, Interpret Data	2011-12	Evaluation of data research projects in 690	71% mastered 11% partially mastered 18% did not master	More focus on statistical significance of coefficient estimates in Econ 312.
4. Oral Presentation	2011-12	No Oral Presentations during 2010-2011		Remove this objective from assessment tool due to lack of resources.
5. Written Presentation	2011-12	Evaluation of writing quality in final report of data research project in Econ 690	68% mastered 18% partially mastered 14% did not master	Create new skill set assignments for developing theoretical argument in Econ 690.

**LINKING ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**  
**MA ECONOMICS**

**V. PROGRAM**

M.A. in Economics

**VI. PROGRAM MISSION**

The Economics Department at San Francisco State University seeks to prepare graduate students for jobs in the public and private sectors as economic analysts, to prepare students for further graduate study, and to further civil discourse in public policy as informed citizen in the affairs of our society. The department trains its students by imparting knowledge of current modes of economic thought central to the discipline of economics, particularly in the use of quantitative methods used in economics. In addition, the Economics Department helps its students master the ability to collect, process, and draw conclusions from economic information, as well as develop skills to effectively communicate economic ideas both orally and in writing. These goals are achieved on a continuing basis through formal classroom and laboratory instructions, economics seminars organized on a regular basis, as well as informal interaction between students and Economics faculty members.

**VII. PROGRAM GOALS**

Students graduating with an M.A. in Economics should be able to use economic theory and quantitative methods to analyze economic problems and to evaluate economic policy solutions. They should know how to collect economic information, process it at a sufficiently high level of expertise, and draw conclusions from it. They should be able to critically evaluate scholarly economic research and propose novel extensions of that research. They should be able to effectively communicate economic ideas in writing and speaking at a level greater than the undergraduate students.

**VIII. ASSESSING STUDENT ATTAINMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The department's assessment plan focuses on assessing how well students have mastered the learning outcomes as measured by their performance on our comprehensive examination, which is administered in spring semester and is required for all economics graduate students.

**Overall Student Learning Outcomes in Economics**

Professor Lisa Takeyama, economics graduate coordinator, collected data on overall student learning outcomes from the comprehensive written examination administered in April 2012. Part of the reason for the examination is to see how well our graduate students are prepared for future careers in the economics profession and to assess how well graduate students mastered the four major learning objectives identified by the department as critical outcomes for the program.

She assessed the percentage of students taking the exam who were able to master specific learning objectives linked to learning goals identified in the department's assessment plan. She grouped students into three broad categories according to how well they mastered a particular learning objective:

- Fully mastered the objective
- Partially mastered the objective
- Did not master the objective

### **Broad Student Learning Objectives**

The following specific objectives were developed and were linked to specific assessment questions on the comprehensive examination:

1. Students should be able evaluate scholarly research across a variety of economic fields. They should be able to identify the questions addressed and understand the importance of those questions and findings to a larger body of related economic research.
2. Students should be able to critically evaluate economic research by identifying strengths and weaknesses (e.g., with model, assumptions, methodology, data analysis, etc.) and providing sound economic reasoning for their assessments.
3. Students should be able to formulate a set of novel research questions extending an existing literature.
4. Students should be able to write a critical review ("referee report") for a variety of theoretical and/or empirical economic research that spans multiple areas of emphasis.

**Inventory of Program Assessment Activities for Academic Year 2011 - 2012**

This grid offers a model for simplifying departmental assessment endeavors on an annual basis as part of a cycle of academic program review or accreditation. The program’s assessment plan should be structured in such a way as to assess all of the program’s key learning objectives in the time period between program review and accreditations by concentrating on a subset of objectives each year.

On the grid, the first column identifies **all** of the key learning objectives anticipated for students completing the program. The second column lists the year a particular objective was or will be assessed. The third column indicates the strategies employed in a given academic year to assess student attainment of that subset of objectives chosen for review that year. The fourth and fifth columns summarize the results of the year’s assessment endeavors and show how those results are being used to enhance program quality.

**College: Business**

**Program: \_\_\_Economics\_\_\_\_\_, Degree \_\_\_M.A.\_\_\_\_ Date: February 21, 2014**

**[Create a separate inventory for each degree, program, and concentration.]**

<b>Key Learning Objectives for this Program</b>	<b>Academic Year Objective was/will be Assessed</b>	<b>Methods/Strategies Used to Assess Given Year’s Chosen Objectives</b>	<b>Summary of Findings About Student Learning</b>	<b>Use of Findings to Enhance Program Quality</b>
1. Evaluate Scholarly Research	2011-12	Comprehensive Written Examination	97% mastered 3% partially mastered 0% did not master	
2. Critical Analysis of Scholarly Research	2011-12	Comprehensive Written Examination	91% mastered 9% partially mastered 0% did not master	There is some room for improvement, particularly regarding analysis and discussion of methodologies.
3. Novel Research Questions and Extensions	2011-12	Comprehensive Written Examination	97% mastered 3% partially mastered 0% did not master	
4. Written Presentation	2011-12	Comprehensive Written Examination	97% mastered 3% partially mastered 0% did not master	Improvement from the past, because compared to the past practices, more courses now require written presentation.