

Economics Department Student Outcomes Assessment Update

The Department of Economics has taken the following steps toward the implementation of a program of student outcomes assessment.

1. It has developed a “Student Outcomes Assessment Procedure” document to guide the process. A copy of this document is attached to this update memo.
2. It has developed, and is now teaching for the first time this semester, Econ499, Senior Seminar. This course is the program’s capstone course and is the site for much of the programmatic assessment called for in the assessment procedures.
3. The department has implemented a student portfolio project. This project is just getting started this academic year. Academic advisors will work with students on maintaining their portfolios and the portfolios will be evaluated during the senior seminar. A copy of the “Instructions for Compiling Student Portfolios for Economics Majors” is attached to this update memo.
4. The student affairs committee (chaired by Richard Lotspeich) has been working with the instructor of the Senior Seminar (Aimin Chen) to establish a procedure for data collection and use within the Seminar course. A copy of the Student Affairs Committee’s most recent report which reflects the committee’s thinking about how to proceed with the assessment through the capstone course is attached to this update.

Current Results

Currently the first group of majors is enrolled in the senior capstone course. Because this course was only recently created and approved as a requirement, only those students who transferred to ISU (or into the economics department) with at least 2 years of college work are in the class this semester. This is only 4 students. We are running the course this semester for these 4 transfer students as a trial run. The students are not representative of our majors because they did not take their economic foundation courses at ISU.

What the committee is working on, with the instructor of the course, is what data to collect and how to use it to improve our curriculum and how it is taught. We will begin this process next fall when the data from this first running of the course is completed, but it will take at least an additional year to collect usable data. The data from the current offering is not going to be useful due to the small number of students in the course this first time (4) and the fact that they are not representative of our students.

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