

2010-2011 UNM Economics MA Program Assessment Report

Academic year: 2010-2011

Department/Program: Economics/Graduate Program

Degree program(s): MA

Date submitted: Oct. 11, 2011

- 1. List the student learning outcomes (SLOs) that were assessed during the academic year, including those for which data were gathered as well as those for which developmental work was done, such as the creation or piloting of assessment measures.**

The following five SLO's were adopted by the faculty Spring 2008.

A1. Students explain and manipulate complex economic models.

B1. Students use appropriate econometrics to explore economic issues and test hypotheses.

B2. Students undertake original economic analysis.

C1. Students effectively present their work to peers and PhD economists.

C2. Students effectively present their work and economics ideas to interdisciplinary and general audiences, including undergraduate students.

2. For each learning outcome, describe a) the measures used (at least one-half of the measures used are to be direct measures, and at least one direct measure must be used for each SLO), b) the sample of students from whom data were collected, c) the timetable, and d) the setting in which the measures were administered.

SLO	Description
A1, B1, B2, C1	<p>a) Measure: MA Thesis [DIRECT]. Thesis and Dissertation committees evaluate student work according to professional standards.</p> <p>b) Sample: 8 MA students</p> <p>c) Timetable: 2008-11</p> <p>d) Setting: Thesis defense scheduled in the Departmental Conference Room individually for each student when their committee has determined the research adequate to fulfill the requirements.</p>
C2	<p>a) Measure: Job placement [INDIRECT]. Ongoing work.</p> <p>b) Sample:</p> <p>c) Timetable:</p> <p>d) Setting:</p>
C2	<p>a) Measure: Students effectively present their work and economics ideas to interdisciplinary and general audiences [DIRECT]. Ongoing work.</p> <p>b) Sample:</p> <p>c) Timetable:</p> <p>d) Setting:</p>

3. Describe the results of the assessment. (What do they tell you about student learning? What did you learn about strengths and weaknesses of your program?) If specific results are not available, describe the progress that has been made on the initiatives included in the approved assessment plan.

A1. Students explain and manipulate complex economic models.

Two students completed an MA thesis in 2010-2011. Relevant to this SLO, each member of their committee scores their thesis on substance, methodology, and an evaluation of the work as a whole. Each objective is scored out of 5 points, where 5 is best. The averages for each student as well as the average of the graduating cohort are shown below. For comparison purposes, the averages and standard deviations since 2008 are also presented.

We learned that on average, the theses scored moderately high on substance and methodology, and on the evaluation of the work as a whole. This suggests that students who complete the MA are able to explain and manipulate complex economic models at an appropriate level.

SLO A1 (Students explain and manipulate complex economic models): Evaluation of theses								
	2008-09 (n=3)		2009-10 (n=3)		2010-11 (n=2)			
	Avg	Std Dev	Avg	Std Dev	Student		Avg	Std Dev
					#1	#2		
Substance	3.72	0.75	4.3	.89	3.3	4.3	3.8	0.71

Methodology	3.83	0.76	4.4	.98	3.3	4	3.7	0.49
Evaluation of Work as Whole	3.81	0.88	4.2	1.08	3.3	4.0	3.7	0.49

B1. Students use appropriate econometrics to explore economic issues and test hypotheses.

Both theses had a significant econometric component, demonstrating that students are using econometrics to explore economic issues and test hypotheses. Relevant to this SLO, each member of their committee scores their thesis on substance and methodology. Each objective is scored out of 5 points. The averages for each student as well as the average of the graduating cohort are shown below as well as averages and standard deviations from the previous two years.

SLO B1 (Students use appropriate econometrics to explore economic issues and test hypotheses): Evaluation of theses								
	2008-09 (n=3)		2009-10 (n=3)		2010-11 (n=2)			
	Avg	Std Dev	Avg	Std Dev	Student #1	Student #2	Avg	Std Dev
Substance	3.72	0.75	3.0	.89	3.3	4.3	3.9	0.71
Methodology	4.4	.98	4.4	.98	3.3	4	3.7	0.49

We learned that students are scoring fairly well on each criterion, suggesting that they are appropriately applying econometrics to address economic issues and to test hypotheses.

B2. Students undertake original economic analysis.

SLO B2 (Students undertake original economic analysis): Evaluation of theses								
	2008-09 (n=3)		2009-10 (n=3)		2010-11 (n=2)			
	Avg	Std Dev	Avg	Std Dev	Student #1	Student #2	Avg	Std Dev
Originality	4.39	0.1	4.3	0.3	3.3	4.0	3.7	.47

All MA theses are assessed on their originality (out of a possible five points). On average, theses scored moderately well on these criteria, suggesting that those who receive a MA are undertaking original economic analysis. Students had stronger average scores for originality in 2008-09 and 2009-10.

C1. Students effectively present their work to peers and PhD economists.

MA theses are also evaluated on the basis of style, which captures the ability to effectively present their written work to PhD economists. The score on style was moderately high, suggesting that MA students are capable of presenting their work to peers and PhD economists.

SLO C1 (Students effectively present their work to peers and PhD economists): Evaluation of theses								
	2008-09 (n=3)		2009-10 (n=3)		2010-11 (n=2)			
	Avg	Std Dev	Avg	Std Dev	Student #1	Student #2	Avg	Std Dev
Style	3.81	0.82	4.2	.07	3.0	4.0	3.5	0.71

C2. Students effectively present their work and economics ideas to interdisciplinary and general audiences, including undergraduate students.

One indirect measure of this measure is job placement. One of the MA students who graduated summer 2010 was hired as an economist (from internship status) at Sandia National Labs. As part of this job, this individual does a large number of economic presentations to general audiences. Work is in progress to more systematically track the jobs that MA students take, after completing their degree.

4. Describe the departmental process by which faculty reviewed the assessment procedures and results and decided on the actions and/or revisions that were indicated by them

Because of our recent Academic Program Review, there has been significant discussion of the MA program. A self-study of the program was conducted and an external committee visited and evaluated the program. The external committee recommended that the stand-alone MA program be discontinued, due to lack of resources. During the faculty retreat in August, the faculty discussed the stand-alone MA program and concerns over whether entry standards were high enough for the MA program, given that these students takes the same courses as the PhD students. The department's strategic vision, which was unanimously approved by the faculty included the statement that 'Conditional on the successful implementation of the MPP [Masters in Public Policy] program, the department may consider dropping its stand-alone MA program in the future'. The graduate committee will be holding further discussions of the stand-alone MA program during the 2011-2012 academic year.

5. Describe the actions and/or revisions that were implemented in response to the assessment processes and results.

A form collecting employer contact information was included in graduating students' paperwork. This year, we intend to add to this form and include a stable mail, phone number, and e-mail address for the individual, so that we can better track their progress.

The faculty approved a motion that streamlines the graduation process of students who have switched from the PhD to the MA exam track.

To assist MA students in graduating on time, MA students were provided with a memo to remind them that a major advisor should be chosen as soon as possible after the completion of 12 credit

hrs. This should also help students complete their program of studies sooner. The graduate director and academic advisor held a meeting with all MA students to discuss paperwork and year goals.