

**Agenda and Evaluation Report for
Audit & Review Face-to-Face Meeting
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Economics Majors and Minors, 2020-2021**

Date: 2/10/2021

Time: 9:00-10:30

Place: WebEx

Invited: Interim Provost Greg Cook; Interim AVC Kristin Plessel; Dean John Chenoweth (Business & Econ); Department Chair/Program Coordinator Jeff Heinrich; faculty and staff in the Economics program; Audit & Review Team Chair Eric Appleton; Audit & Review team members Janine Tobeck, Tom Klubertanz, and Assessment Representative Katy Casey.

- 1) Call to order
- 2) Introductions
- 3) Overview of review team evaluation, program comments

The college expert made note of the above-and-beyond work of the program; the committee appreciated the program's candid, self-reflective/self-critical, and honest reporting, which allowed them to provide better feedback.

- 4) Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:

- a) What are the unique features of this program, what sets it apart from other program in the region? Is there an identity re-evaluation occurring, and in what direction would the program like to head? How does this connect to the current perception of the program's reputation amongst potential students?

Ahmad: Much self-evaluation in past five years; what does program do well, what not so well? Perception reported by general students is that economics is hard

Winden: Program is in midst of ongoing serious discussions; program has pride in robust and rigorous curriculum. Can the program find a way to be more accepting but maintain rigor? Perhaps dual tracks; one aimed at graduate study, and a track for more general accessibility.

Heinrich: On question of program's consideration of Equity and Social Justice curriculum, noted that the professional organization has adopted guidelines for inclusivity and that the program is working to align

Huh: Notes that she is currently teaching Economics of Discrimination

- b) How does the program prioritize goals and actions? The program has an extensive list of goals and activities with proposed completion dates, but what mechanism is in place to prevent the program from overwhelming itself?

Ahmad discussed program strategic planning process: long term goals determine year to year goals; every 5 years the program does an envisioning exercise, reviews mission statement, etc. Short term goals then feed into the long- and medium-term goals. At the end of the academic year, the program takes stock and revises goals and activities for upcoming year, selecting higher priority and most actionable items.

Heinrich: prioritization is done via personnel interest, opportunity, cost, and time availability

Casey: How equitably are the efforts shared by members of the program?

Winden: voluntary; assignments are made by interest, but the program tries to offer support broadly and evenly. The majority of the program made contributions in assembling the A&R report; feels workload is shared very well.

Ersal: The strategic plan committee is working on adopting a more student-centric approach to goal making, collecting data from past and present students; in recruitment looking for ways to help students to see career and social/personal values

Casey: Sounds like the issue is more recruitment than retention

Heinrich: Program is building on assessments in lower level courses to better track student progress as they move through the curriculum

- c) How does the program pull data for assessment? What sources across the curriculum provide the data? It looks like decisions are made based on collected evidence, but there was curiosity as to the means of data collection.

Heinrich: IRP dashboard is a godsend; thank you Lois.

Cook: Regarding DFWI rates: are there areas of the program that seem to be barriers? Are rates even across the program?

Winden: 201 (Intro) has highest rates in program, but compared to intro classes across campus not out of average. Program has been conscientious about addressing DFWI rates – more student centered, lower caps, more interaction – met with mixed success, as much seems to depend upon the student's preparation as a new student

Heinrich: Program knows what rates are but the question is why; remark of concern about administration's seeming lack of interest in addressing the why.

Cook: Gratified to see program exploring DFWI matters; overall concern across campus regarding preparation difference among different groups of students. Program should consider a follow up session with ACV Plessel.

Winden: No one wants students to get Ds and Fs; how as instructors can we get extra resources to help students with less pre-university preparation without making it a part of the course itself? Lack of preparation does not mean lack of success. If the university accepts a student, it's the program's job to help them be successful.

Cook: Plessel's strength areas in active learning and student success programs; suggests adoption of asset-minded mindset rather than deficit-minded mindset. Student population will continue to diversify; focus less on students' perceived weakness, and bolster their strengths; university needs to work to connect with strengths the students already possess.

Plessel: LEARN center has resources. Also think about students' hidden potentials; how do we as educators unlock these.

Heinrich: Program has been working the last five years to move to a more student-centered mindset

Plessel: The fact that there is a conversation shows progress

Hayek: Teaches 2-4 sections of 201; noticed that when there was a shift to soft skills the students responded; not just focus on academic success, but personal maturity and growth

Plessel: Soft skills are also 21st Century employability skills (LEAP principles)

Heinrich: We don't teach economics – we teach students.

5. Recommended Actions:

The Committee's recommended actions are based upon actions the program self-identifies as desired goals.

Recommended actions (see page 13):

1. Work on exterior perceptions of program, marketing, recruitment; develop realistic goals for enrollment within available resources. a) Work on strategies to better differentiate the majors and how to better connect and inform across all advising bodies b) Look for ways to improve gateway student experiences; pros and cons to open more doors to non-CoBE students c) Revise mission statement to better reflect program aspirations
2. Work on consistency in curriculum across multi-section courses
3. Continue work on current self-identified program goals and assessment efforts, including creating SLOs for minor. (see self-study sections on Program Goals and Program Areas of Improvement).
4. Begin conversations with College and University on ways to offer a broader variety of upper division courses (balance of service, research, staffing, etc.).

Discussion of SLOs for Minor; a minor is still a program of study – having completed a minor, what is the student expected to know. For a program where the minor is a subset of the major, data from major can inform minor; no need to do it all separately. University asks that every program have SLOs associated with it.

Cook: Thanks to review team, gratified by program representation and presence of administrators. Thanks to program for honest, thorough self-study. Has been through 3 Econ self-studies now, has seen growth and change and is proud of the program.

5) **Recommended Result:** *Continuation without qualification*

- **Please make use of the detailed comments in the evaluation report (below).**
- **Please select all applicable boxes and fill in the appropriate year:**
 - Next FULL self-study will be due to the Dean on October 1, Choose an item. and to the Assessment Office on November 1, Choose an item..
 - Next SHORT self-study will be due to the Dean on October 1, 2025 and to the Assessment Office on November 1, 2025.
 - A progress report will be due Choose an item., of [Year]

6) Adjourn.

Review team report is attached below, including Recommended Actions and instructions for Progress Reports (if required).

**University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Committee Form: Review of Audit & Review Self-Studies
Undergraduate Programs, 2020-2021
Majors/Minors and Standalone Minors**

Date of Evaluation 12/2/2021 Short Self Study (SS*) _____
 Program: Economics Major Minor

Evaluations submitted by: Eric Appleton, Tom Klubertanz, Janine Tobeck, Katy Casey, Ahmad Karim
Review meeting attended by: Eric Appleton, Ahmad Karim, Janine Tobeck, Tom Klubertanz, Katy Casey

General Program Information

1. The program's mission statement reflects the nature and sco

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. The program is aware and reflective of changes affecting improvement since the last review.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

3. Characteristics of the program set it apart from others when compared regionally and nationally. The unique aspects of the program attract students.

1	Sufficient Evidence	2
2	Some/Partial Evidence	2
3	No/Limited Evidence	1

4. The program has been responsive to actions recommended from the previous Audit and Review Reports; Progress Reports have been submitted, if relevant.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to Section I

1.1 The framing note regarding whether the current mission is the right one indicates that the program is going through a period of reflection and adjustment. It will be interesting to see what elements are contributing to this possible change in program perspective. Equity and social justice are mentioned as specific areas in which the program wishes to more fully engage.

1.1 The mission statement reflects the nature and scope of the program, but (as noted) is faculty-centric, and may bear revision for closer alignment with the clear student outcomes.

1.2 The program has a good culture of reflecting upon feedback, on its own successes and shortcomings, and reaching consensus regarding goals and strategies.

1.2 The program should be commended for its accomplishments - specifically a prolific publishing record. Considerable reflection has taken place in how to recruit and retain students. In addition, the program indicates progress in the area of assessment.

1.3. No discipline-specific accreditation available.

1.4. Action has been taken and continues to be taken on the previous recommendations. Assessment efforts are moving forward and the program knows what steps are next. Work on (d) was noted as not having yet begun because of other pressing priorities.

II. Alignment within the University

1. The program contributes to the fulfillment of UW-Whitewater's Mission and Strategic Plan.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. The program supports general education and/or proficiency programs at the University.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

3. The program is collaborative and supports other academic programs across the College and/or University.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to Section II

2.1 & 2 Alignment with University: Significant contributions to other programs in COBE, and in meeting general education proficiency requirements.

2.2 & 3 Most of the interdepartmental connections are within CoBE and the College of Ed. If social justice and equity issues become more prominent parts of the curriculum, it will be interesting to see what other departments the program makes connections with.

III. Program Goals & Accomplishments

1. Goals and objectives were identified and undertaken to improve/advance the program.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. Goals currently in place will continue to the program's advancement. Criteria for determining success were measurable and attainable.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

3. The program has a process for setting and assessing goals and making decision about changes to the program.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to Section III

3. 1&2 Measures of strategies to reach goals were not fully articulated. How much enrollment growth? How many upper-level elective courses would provide students a desirable range of options? The goals themselves were good, though.

3.1 Looks like goals and objectives are specific and actionable, and that the program has benchmarks to know if a goal has been met with success.

3.2 It is a long list of goals, and I didn't see a prioritization of them beyond expected completion dates -- which makes me worry a little about how much the program is attempting to do all at the same time.

3.3 The program's practice of annual strategic planning is excellent. Their collegial culture helps support such dialog. One thing I do not see, though, is evidence that students have a path to inform and educate the strategic planning process.

3.3 Program Goals: Program engages in annual strategic planning. Goals are aligned with campus priorities, are clear and actionable. Kudos to the consistent and sustainable practice of setting and reviewing program goals. The program's outreach to high schools is commendable. Congrats on online BBA!

IV. Curriculum

1. The program has a clearly articulated, efficient, and purposeful curriculum.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. The program prepares students in majors, minors, and related emphases tracks in post-graduation and other applicable experiences.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

3. Appropriate assessment data were used in making curricular revisions.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

4. Students participate in the high impact practices.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to Section IV

4.1. As I read through the advising materials and the program's website, I do not see a comparison of the BBA Econ, BS, and BA degrees. Students would want to know the differences between these up front, without asking an advisor.

4.1 Curriculum: Decisions related to program and course offerings are pragmatic and reflect the thoughtful and manageable expectations of faculty and staff. HIPs required in program.

4.2 IV. It was noted that students felt 'over-prepared' for their jobs post-graduation. What exactly does this mean and is it truly a detriment to students/program? Is the program too ambitious for the present job market?

4.3 What can be done about "the heavy service" burden to allow the program to better offer the upper level electives students are requesting?

4.4. The opportunities for students in the program to engage with faculty and with the discipline outside of class are excellent. That FERC and other efforts have been fruitful despite large class sizes and research expectations should be celebrated. The online degree is a good addition and provides access to additional students.

4.4. Strong cross-college support; multiple HIPs

V. Assessment of Student Learning

1. The program has clearly articulated learning outcomes for students.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. Student learning outcomes are "mapped" to the curriculum.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

3. The program provided a timeline indicating when faculty and staff assess SLOs. The timeline is manageable and sustainable.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

5. Program faculty consider assessment data in making changes to the curriculum, students' learning outcomes, and/or other aspects of the program.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

6. Student learning outcomes are aligned with the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes in a way that is reasonable and meaningful.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to Section V

5.1 Noted that SLOs for the minor have yet to be created.

5.4. Intermediate-level assessment is in development, but analysis of results is guiding practice at all levels.

5.5 Assessment throughout the program has improved and now implemented at 200-level.

5.5 Assessment of Student Learning: Three assessments measure program SLOs (listed as proficiency requirements): Thesis paper, Thesis Presentation, Exam. The Assurance of Learning framework provides a good structure to align course and program assessment efforts. Good review of findings. How many students are included in each analysis? Findings were revealing and insightful. The program uses data to inform decisions. How do instructors pull data out of courses to share at program and college levels?

5.5 All of the curricular adjustments listed appear well supported by collected data.

VI. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation: A. Trend Data

1. Five-year enrollment and graduation trends reflect program vitality and sustainability.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. [MAJORS ONLY] Credits-to-degree show that students can complete the degree in four years, or reasonably efficiently.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

3. [MAJORS ONLY] Program has strategies to recruit and retain students.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to Section VI.A

6.1 If the program hadn't addressed the current drop in enrollment, I would have marked this question down one level. To their credit, they did not just blame the dip on overall campus/college trends.

6.1 Program is attending to causes of enrollment drops and analyzing and implementing multiple strategies to correct for this.

6.1 It was noted that enrollment is down, due to a number of factors both internal and external. Staffing levels seem to balance current enrollment, but future budget cuts could reduce staffing, which would in turn reduce sustainable enrollment numbers. It sounds like the program's main competition is from within CoBE itself: "more business programs launched minors which naturally diluted the market."

6.2 It is unlikely that students could complete the 130+ credits in four years, especially given the reputation of program rigor.

6.3 Social media and website presence are important. Disappointing that the efforts to create a recruitment video hit a snag. Who could help produce something that would pass website standards? Program should further seek support within CoBE marketing group.

6.3 Recruitment strategies have been implemented. The program identified an issue with perception of the program and impact on advising. Is there a plan to dig into this?

VI. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation: B. Demand for Graduates

1. [MAJORS ONLY] Placement information indicates that program graduates find employment or continue their education.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

VII. Resource Availability & Development: A. Faculty and Staff Resources

1. Information on numbers of full and part-time faculty and staff are provided. Expertise of teaching staff are aligned with the needs and future vision for the program.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

2. Information is provided about changes in the faculty since the last Audit and Review.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments related to section VII.A

7A.1 There was no mention of various specializations within the faculty and how they support curriculum.

7A.1 It was noted that the program is looking toward adding topics on Equity and social justice, which means that faculty might see a certain amount of 're-training.'

7A.1 Noted that there seems to be an imbalance between research and teaching, due to 'college efforts to incentivize and increase research productivity over the past decade' and that there is a high SCH/FTE load that is a heavy burden. "The faculty will need to build their expertise in teaching and pedagogy."

7A.2 The program said that they have been able to hire and retain the best candidates from searches. That provides an opportunity to make sure that a sound pedagogy and teaching experience are requirements for being one of those top candidates. The admitted emphasis on research programs may have affected how candidates are evaluated. Greater program emphasis on pedagogy starts with who you hire.

VII. Resource Availability & Development: B. Student Resources

1. The program has adequate personnel, student help, and service and supplies to serve its undergraduate students.

1	Sufficient Evidence	4
2	Some/Partial Evidence	1
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments for VII.B

7B.1 The greatest concern to me is the high SCH/FTE held and large number of sections for the 200-level courses. I can see how that would affect staffing and curriculum for upper-level courses. It also negatively affects pedagogy and instructor innovation. I did note the comment by the program that the most popular instructors could move to the intro courses to give those better success (like lower DFW rates). Regardless of whether instructor popularity drives higher enrollment in some 200 level sections, developing a degree of curriculum standardization across the sections will help incentivize good pedagogy and high expectations for student achievement. Standard resources (no mention of tutoring was made) and instructional expectations can be made without infringing upon pedagogical freedom, especially in a collegial group.

7B.1 Suggestion that resources are currently as lean as they can be without negatively impacting students.

7B.1 The program notes that it is 'caught in a trap' right now, with too few majors to offer enticing upper level electives, serving 200 level courses and the BA, and more required sections of 201A (gateway courses). They have capacity to serve more majors, but not broaden curricular offerings.

7B.1 The programs notes that it is "getting by;" physical space is short and availability of computer labs 'could perhaps be improved.' It is noted that more support computing hardware, data, software, and professional presentations would be very useful.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations from the Department or Program

1. Areas of strength are discussed.

1	Sufficient Evidence	5
2	Some/Partial Evidence	0
3	No/Limited Evidence	0

General Comments for VIII

8.1 Thoughtful awareness and presentation of strengths as well as challenges.

8.1 The program offers a solid list of their own recommended actions: a) take control of program narrative for recruiting, advising, retention b) shift faculty so as to contribute to more positive gateway course experiences for students c) improve curricular coherence within multi-section courses d) create and revise upper level elective courses e) increase efforts in faculty pedagogy development and course design (balance of research/teaching) f) continue tracking graduates g) reconstitute the Advisory Board

Reviewer Conclusions

1. Strengths of the Program

1. People and leadership. Employability of graduates. Support of General Education. Research accomplishments, especially with student collaborators. Knowledge and skills resource regarding Economics in the greater community.

2. Emphasis on and consistent curricular support for critical thinking skills; multiple and multifaceted HIPs; high faculty/student engagement in program courses and research opportunities; high faculty research and professional activity

3. Strong faculty contributions to research. Clear program goals that are reviewed annually. Assessment plan is in place, data collected informs practice. Reflective of areas in which the program can improve.

4. Strong research and excellent teaching. Outstanding community engagement through FERC.

5. Supports a fair number of other programs within CoBE and the College of Ed. Faculty are very active in their field. Assessment efforts are structured and look sustainable, fostering effective curricular examination and revision. Student engagement is exceptional.
6. College expert notes that no other department has the level of journal publication *with* student contributors in the college. A tremendous level of student engagement.

2. Areas for Work or Improvement

1. Perceptions of the program in both the study body and advisors. Communication challenges--outward-facing (public perception, recruitment and advising efforts). Work with various advising offices (AAEC, COBE) to look into the perception of the Economics program.

2. Highly structured curriculum plus heavy service-course load conflicts with majors' desires for electives and, potentially, new-student interest; limited access of non-majors to intermediate level appears to limit recruitment opportunities and sustainability of major courses

3. Clarification of degree options. How would a student know which is best for them?

4. Internships.

5. Address goals related to faculty perceptions of teaching.

6. It looks like the program is going through an identity crisis, and the resolution of this will determine the direction of the program in years to come. The mission statement is rather general and generic; success and quality are well and fine, but what is that success and quality in service to?

3. Other comments/questions

1. I appreciate the efforts by the program and the preparer of the self-study for an informative and reflective submission. The commentary and materials effectively provided honest insight into the program.

2. The self-study was well written and very reflective. The program appears to value student learning and take seriously their role in the college/university.

4. Recommended Actions (please specify):

1. Work on exterior perceptions of program, marketing, recruitment; develop realistic goals for enrollment within available resources.

a) Work on strategies to better differentiate the majors and how to better connect and inform across all advising bodies

b) Look for ways to improve gateway student experiences; pros and cons to open more doors to non-CoBE students

c) Revise mission statement to better reflect program aspirations

2. Work on consistency in curriculum across multi-section courses

3. Continue work on current self-identified program goals and assessment efforts, including creating SLOs for minor. (see self-study sections on Program Goals and Program Areas of Improvement).

4. Begin conversations with College and University on ways to offer a broader variety of upper division courses (balance of service, research, staffing, etc.).

5. Recommended Result

1	Insufficient Information in the self-study to make a determination; revise self-study & resubmit.	0
2	Continuation without qualification. Next self-study will be a shortened one focusing on the Recommended Actions from the current report.	5
3	Continuation with minor concerns. Progress report may be required, at the discretion of the review team.	0
4	Continuation with major concerns in one or more of the four areas; submit annual progress report to the College Dean & Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on progress addressing the major concerns	0
5	Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, and require another complete Audit & Review self-study within 1-3 years, at the Committee's discretion.	0
6	Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, recommend placing in receivership within the college, and require another complete Audit & Review self-study within 1-3 years at the Committee's discretion.	0
7	Non-continuation of the program.	0
8	Report not submitted; refer to Provost for action.	0