

Recommendations

The team commends the Department for expanding its curriculum and offerings of programs and courses. The team cautions the Department that offering too many programs will require regular offering of a large number of courses, stretching faculty and resources, reducing student credit hours (without growth in the student population), and may make matriculation from some weaker programs more difficult for students. The College will need to support small class sizes in the event of student-major enrollment volatility.

Response

The faculty agree that the college will need to continue to support small class sizes. The college has done an excellent job of this so far. One point in terms of offering too many programs is that requirements mostly overlap with respect to the courses within the department. For example, a General Economics major can take the same economics courses as an International Economics major in fulfillment of requirements. This means that a large number of programs does not necessarily imply a large, distinct number of course offerings. The department will continue to monitor enrollments in light of this recommendation.

Recommendations

With such a large number of programs, it may be difficult to assess all departmental learning outcomes for all programs. In addition, with assessment taking place in the Research Methods class (across all programs, with the exception of the AS), how will the growing number of students likely to take the Economics Internship option be assessed? Businesses are increasingly interested in hiring students with Internships. As this trend continues, fewer Business Economics and International Business Economics students will be assessed under the current departmental curriculum map. The Department might also want to consider providing some courses in which students can master the learning outcome (none are listed in the Map). In addition, the department may wish to add some level of learning (introduced, emphasized or mastered) of Learning Outcome 5 in ECON 1100, 4520, and 4810.

Regarding the feeling about too much assessment, perhaps learning outcomes between the university, college and department can be streamlined in some way so that assessment at one level is also occurring at other levels.

The Department should develop assessment tools to track the impact of the experimental lab on teaching and research. These tools should track impact on majors, learning outcomes, articles published, etc. Results can be used to ensure further funding sources for the lab.

Help from the College and University levels may be needed to better track progress and efficiency toward graduation and next-step-success of graduates.

Response

The team is correct in that much of the assessment has occurred in the ECON 4980 – Research Methods course. Students using the internship option instead of Research Methods do not participate in the assessment process. The department will close this loop by having internship students take the assessment test as part of the course. Another strategy the department will implement for assessing internship students is to have the internship employer rate the student with respect to department

Calls for changes in advising to better meet the needs of students is a university-wide topic. Recently the Admissions, Standards and Student Affairs Committee presented a document to faculty senate encouraging each college to create an academic advisement plan. The document received the support of the full faculty senate body. The Advising Subcommittee of the Student Success Steering Committee is also committed to meeting the advising needs of students. In addition to department efforts, we look forward to partnering with the college to create an academic advisement plan including an advising council to address ongoing retention and advising issues.

Recommendations:

plan of the College and allowing all departments to showcase their strengths and contributions would likely go a long way toward creating a stronger team spirit among departments.

The Department is also concerned with the five-

Elimination of calculus for many programs in the College will directly and indirectly impact the Department and enrollment in economics majors. Perhaps the Department and College can agree to

workshops and summer schools (e.g. zTree or oTree programming workshops, experimental economics workshops for macroeconomists, etc.) on experimental methodology would be other worthy opportunities for experimental faculty development.

Faculty could be encouraged to attend specialized workshops on teaching economics with laboratory experiments, which would allow them to expand such experiential learning in variety of their courses.

A more prudent way to maintain ORSEE database would be by automatic enrollment of all matriculated university students with an option to opt out.

The current IRB practices seem to be timely and reasonable, but they also could be improved by granting all standard laboratory economic experiments, i.e. those that fulfil the widely accepted protocols, a blanket IRB approval. Thus, only the studies that involve vulnerable groups of subjects or non-standard experimental protocols would be required to go through full IRB review.

Developing appropriate assessment tools to track this impact would further facilitate prudent development of the experimental economics lab at Weber State.

Response

The department will consider sending faculty members to the Economic Science Association's meetings. Currently the department philosophy with respect to research conferences is to only provide funding if a faculty member is presenting. However, given the potential of the experimental lab to bring prominence to the department, and on the advice of the program review team, we may reconsider this position.

The department will work towards automatic enrollment of all matriculated university students in the ORSEE database. The department will also inquire about the feasibility of a blanket IRB approval for standard laboratory economic experiments.

The department agrees that assessment tools to track the impact of the experimental lab are appropriate.