



Instructional Program Review Summary 2004-05

Instructional Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: ECON

February 15, 2005

Instructional Program Review Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Program. The overarching goal of the ACC ECON program is to teach those introductory economics courses which are appropriate during the first two years of college, to any and all students who desire to learn this body of knowledge. Traditionally, economics has been considered too advanced for the typical college freshman. The study of economics would begin in the sophomore year. In recent years there has been a trend, including ACC and other colleges, to soften course content and/or grading standards and offer the economics courses to freshmen and even to high school seniors. Also, it is common practice nowadays to focus on teaching various learning and life-skills in these courses as identified by psychologists and educators, including “communication skills”, “critical thinking skills”, “library research skills” and so on. In deference to the times, the professional economists of the ACC ECON program give sincere and conscious attention to teaching such skills, even if the practice diverts student and instructor from the primary and important task of teaching introductory economics. At present the specific purpose of the ACC ECON department at ACC is summarized as follows: **(1) help students understand the economic world that they live in by mastering basic theories and concepts of economics, (2) help economics majors be successful and competitive at four year institutions, (3) support business programs that list economics as a prerequisite, (4) broaden students’ world views and incidentally, (5) develop valuable intellectual skills including the ability to think logically and critically, communicate orally and in writing, calculate, conduct rigorous analysis and engage in research.**

Overview of how the program review was conducted. This review was begun with a review by the chair of the data assembled by the staff. At the first fall meeting of the Division of Social Sciences the chair briefed the Department and got an initial list of committee members, which was subsequently augmented to include the student listed below. It was decided that in addition to this list of committee members, any member of the ECON program (Adjunct or FT) could participate in any of the meetings or deliberations of the Self-Study team as a full voting member. (In fact, these added individuals participated primarily during subsequent regular monthly meetings of the Division of Social Sciences.) To facilitate communication, the chair set up a List-serve called

EconProgRev@austincc.edu of which everyone was a member. Then the chair set a date for, and got a list of volunteers for, the SWOT exercise with ACC's Nancy Jokovich as facilitator. (Prior to the date of the SWOT exercise, an informal SWOT analysis was conducted via the List-serve and a preliminary list of items was assembled, however this list was not used explicitly in the SWOT exercise.) The SWOT exercise was held Sat., Sept. 25, 2004 with the following individuals in attendance: James Sondgeroth, Clint Davis, Luke Armstrong, Scott Tyson, J.T. Hill, Marianna Sidoryanskaya, Geoffrey Andron and Nancy Jokovich (facilitator). The summary of the SWOT exercise, compiled and submitted by Nancy Jokovich, was reviewed at the November 12, 2004 meeting of the Division of Social Sciences. Attendance included Jake Bloom, Marianna Sidoryanskaya, James Sondgeroth, Jack Bucco and Geof Andron. By vote of the committee, a final list of 5 proposed recommendations was agreed to at that meeting for the program's Quality Improvement Plan. This became the 5 point **Quality Improvement Plan** submitted along with this **Instructional Program Review Summary**. At the December meeting of the Division of Social Sciences the work of analysis and research for these recommendations was given to James Sondgeroth and Geof Andron, with James providing necessary input for items 1, 2 and 3, Geof summarizing 4 and 5, and Geof assembling a preliminary draft, which was completed on Monday, January 24, 2005. The entire package of preliminary draft documents was then distributed by List-serve to the ECON program Self-study team for review and comment, with instructions to submit comments to the chair as soon as possible. The chair then placed a review of all documents on the agenda of the next monthly meeting of the Department of Social Sciences, Friday, February 11, 2005. At that meeting written copies of "final preliminary drafts" for all three reports (namely the **Program Status Form**, the **Quality Improvement Plan** and the **Instructional Program Review Summary**) were distributed to everyone present, followed by a review and discussion of the documents. After discussion a motion was made, seconded and passed that the documents be approved subject to suggestions made in that meeting for revision. These revisions were made and the final versions submitted on Tuesday, February 15, 2005.

Summary of findings:

Progress on previous program review recommendations. The previous action plan included the following: 1--Expand full-time faculty to eight members. 2--Increase the use of technology in classroom instruction over the next five years. 3--Improve the evaluation process for all faculty in the department. 4--Improve the tracking procedure with regard to transfer students. 5--Improve inter-discipline and inter-institutional coordination. Considerable progress has been made on item 1 (FT faculty increased from 5 to 6). On item 2 considerable progress has been made in the integration of Internet-based software and communication systems into the distance learning courses but only modest progress integrating the Internet into the conventional courses.

(This is partly due to the inconvenient and somewhat antiquated equipment and hardware available in the classrooms.) With respect to item 3, results have been “fairly successful” as faculty have responded to outlines for departmental syllabi requiring inclusion of key information and continue to administer required department student achievement questions in every section. No progress has been made on item 4, very little on item 5. (Source YearThreeECONupdate.htm, copy attached as Appendix B).

Program strengths. This is a very strong program, its particular strengths include: friendly, committed, cooperative, intelligent, diverse faculty; excellent individualized student support; and an appreciated division chair and dean.

Areas for improvement. The following probably extends beyond just the ECON program to ACC in general, but areas for improvement include the availability and use of classroom technology and further improvement in systems to appropriately evaluate, remediate, reward and terminate faculty.

Key planning issues. How can the ECON program get the necessary approvals, and find the needed resources, for changes which a dispassionate outside observer would agree will serve the greater interests of ACC and our students, however the changes are inconsistent with current college policy, and higher levels of administration must give the authority, and budget the resources?

Conclusions: ECON is one of the strong, vibrant, productive and valuable programs at ACC with an important social contribution to make.

Recommended future directions for the program based on this review:
--Maintain and slightly expand services

Recommendations: Here are is a summary of the self-study’s recommended actions for improving the quality of the ECON program:

- 1--Increase number of full time faculty to 8
- 2--Sharply increase faculty development budget for economics.
- 3--Upgrade classroom technology.
- 4--Facilitate improved teacher effectiveness.
- 5--Implement honors microeconomics class.

(Source: ECON_QIP.doc, submitted along with this summary.)

1. SELF-STUDY TEAM PARTICIPANTS

Geoffrey Andron	Self Study Chair, Professor of Economics, ACC FT faculty
Luke Armstrong	Instructor, ACC, Northwest Vista College, San Antonio College and Palo Alto College--San Antonio
Clint Davis	Instructor, Anthropology-Geography, ACC FT faculty
Michael Forney	Professor of Economics, ACC.
James T Hill	Instructor, ACC Adj. faculty and Texas State U
Nancy Jokovich	Facilitator, ACC
Rex Peebles	Dean, Social and Behavioral Sciences, ACC
Marianna Sidoryauskaya	Professor of Economics, ACC FT faculty, and UT
James Sondgeroth	Professor of Economics, Chair of the Social Sciences and ECON departments, ECON instructor.
Scott Tyson	TA at ACC, former ACC student, UT student.

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The ACC ECON program teaches introductory economics courses which are appropriate during the first two years of college. More specifically, the Economics program's purpose is to: (1) help students understand the economic world that they live in by mastering basic theories and concepts of economics, (2) help economics majors be successful and competitive at four year institutions, (3) support business programs that list economics as a prerequisite, (4) broaden students' world views and incidentally, (5) develop valuable intellectual skills including the ability to think logically and critically, communicate orally and in writing, calculate, conduct rigorous analysis and engage in research.

The program has 6 full time faculty, approximately 20 adjunct faculty, offers courses taught in 60 sections on 6 campuses (plus the distance learning program) to 1700-1900 students per semester. There are conventional classes which are almost always limited to 36 students or less, plus 2-4 distance learning sections which can range in size up to 50 students per section. The program offers three courses: macroeconomics, honors macroeconomics and microeconomics, with plans to offer honors microeconomics starting Spring 2006. Honors macroeconomics is offered once a year in one section to a maximum of 15 students. Of the remaining sections, approximately 53% are usually macroeconomics and 47% microeconomics.

3. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (SWOT)

For each category, here are the items for which a consensus exists among those who participated in the SWOT exercise. Other items are also important, but these are the ones which had urgency among participants.

Strengths. Friendly and cooperative faculty, both Full Time and Adjunct; experienced and knowledgeable; diverse; committed to ongoing improvement; excellent support for students, ranging through: great value--cheap, location, schedule; accessible faculty offering excellent individual support; administration (department chair and dean): laid-back, good leaders, open to new ideas and offering good support.

Weaknesses. Technology: inconvenient and noncurrent technology in the classrooms; success rate: too many students sign up and then drop the courses for difficulty; need better access to more tutoring; too many students sign up who are not ready--high school students and/or poorly prepared; faculty evaluation: less than ideal system and procedures to evaluate faculty, whether for faculty development or for faculty evaluation--student evaluations are too vague and do not help in uncovering faculty poor performance, lack of visits/evaluation of classroom effectiveness; faculty development: lack of resources for faculty development including travel to conferences, study of new teaching techniques, both for regular classroom and DL courses.

Opportunities. External trends/resources: integration with state and local government and public policy think tanks; population growth; expose students to real world in courses (via invited speakers, exposure to political developments); potential improvement through improved use of technology; opportunities through improved course delivery: improve and expand DL courses, improve classroom resources (technology), more resources for faculty travel and study, add mathematical and formal rigor to the courses.

Threats. Budget issues: increasingly hostile public attitude toward academic freedom and autonomy possibly leading to reduced budgets and constrained action; administrative issues: administration bias against resources needed by and for faculty; state and local governments control resources; inefficient administrative system generating unproductive tasks for the faculty.

4. ANALYSIS

[a] Relevance of the program to College mission and desired ends

The overarching goal of the ACC ECON program is to teach those introductory economics courses which are appropriate during the first two years of college--to any and all students desiring to master this body of knowledge. Economics is of immense social and individual value as a discipline and therefore clearly consistent with College mission and desired ends. Moreover, these courses are essential for success in future economics courses, as well as courses in business and other fields of study. In addition to the inherent importance of economics as a discipline, these challenging courses also serve as marvelous media by which students may learn such important learning and life-skills as the ability to think logically and critically, communicate orally and in writing, conduct

rigorous analysis, engage in research activities and so on. All of this, also, is consistent with College mission and desired ends.

Review of purpose statement. The Self-Study team reviewed the program purpose statement and slightly revised it to read as follows:

The Economics program's purpose is to: (1) help students understand the economic world that they live in by mastering basic theories and concepts of economics, (2) help economics majors be successful and competitive at four year institutions, (3) support business programs that list economics as a prerequisite, (4) broaden students' world views and incidentally, (5) develop valuable intellectual skills including the ability to think logically and critically, communicate orally and in writing, calculate, conduct rigorous analysis and engage in research.

[b] Responsiveness to community needs and satisfaction of community demand

Our courses are particularly attractive by virtue of their low tuition cost, geographical convenience (taught on 6 campuses plus the distance learning program and special sites) the convenience of many scheduled times and the value of fairly small class size. The faculty monitors regional and national trends in course content and delivery methods, and also student demand for the courses. Specifically, the faculty is able to monitor the regional competition because many of our faculty also teach courses at neighboring institutions. Also, our program has been a leader and is active in developing, implementing and improving distance learning courses. Enrollment trends over the past five-years included growth exceeding ACC growth through Fall 2002 (from 3.2% up to 3.34% of total course enrollment (Source: Data, #9 b) followed by a decline in Fall 2003 during the recession. Overall, enrollment growth has been on a very slight upward trend.

[c] Accessibility to students with identification of unnecessary barriers

The ECON department recommends additional sections at both the Cyprus and Northridge campuses for both ECON2301 and ECON2302. The shortage will be reduced at Cyprus campus with the expansion by 2007, however unsatisfied demand already exists.

ECON offers approximately 60 sections of our two courses (the macroeconomics honors course has the same title and course number), spread geographically among the campuses and extension and site locations as summarized in the table just below for a typical recent semester, Spring 2004. The table lists total sections, full sections, average section size and canceled sections by location. Extension and Site located sections get canceled with some regularity, at the same time a large fraction of those sections are full, suggesting the challenge is one of scheduling. The ECON program often does not have access to classrooms at the times students find most attractive. Based on reports from campus deans (who hear from students requesting enrollment when desired courses are full) the ECON faculty recommends additional sections

at both the Cyprus and Northridge campuses for both ECON2301 and ECON2302.

	CYP	EVC	NRG	PIN	RGC	RVS	EXT + SIT
Sections	4	1	15	7	11	9	10
Full sections			4		1	2	3
Canceled secs.						1 (ECON23 02)	3 (all_ECON23 01)
Ave. sec size	27.5	19	32.4	28.3	27.1	31	22.5

(Source: Data [c], various.)

Parking is a very serious difficulty at many of our section times and locations. Parking problems lead to unexpressed demand, that is, students who want our courses but don't even bother to enroll for courses. We do not know the size of this unexpressed demand. Parking problems have existed so long and are so well-known, most notably at RGC but also at CYP, NRG and even at PIN at certain times of day, that most faculty and administrators probably believe there is no solution. However, we would like to point out the following:

1. Higher tuition could be charged for courses taught at peak hours, and lower tuition for sections at non-peak hours, encouraging students to shift.
2. Courses could be taught on Saturdays, reducing the load at other days and times.
3. Higher parking fees could be charged for large than for compact vehicles, and even smaller fees for motorcycles.
4. The painted lines in the parking lots could be painted much closer together. (Limited and less convenient, but adequately wide parking spaces, could be set aside for large vehicles.)
5. Higher fees could be charged for parking.

To a considerable extent, it may well be that the "parking problem" at ACC is a direct consequence of shortcomings of ACC's system for identifying problems, seeking creative ideas for their solution, analyzing alternatives, making choices and implementing solutions.

Five-year demographic trends (gender, ethnicity, age group) for this program compared to the overall college trend.

For the college as a whole, major minority groups generally have increased relative to "Whites" over the five year period. Compared to the College, the ECON program percentages of Black and Hispanic continue slightly below (5.51 versus 7.0 and 18.02 versus 21.9 respectively), and White and Asian percentages slightly above (63.29 versus 60.5 and 7.01 versus 5.2 respectively), the ACC averages. (For these comparisons, the ACC averages are from Fall 2003 and the ECON averages from Spring 2004.) (Sources: ACC 2003-2004 Fact Book and Data, #8 b.)

Unnecessary barriers to students. Students need to achieve a certain level of maturity before enrolling in their economics courses. Success in economics requires advanced and sophisticated language, analytical and reasoning skills,

which is why introductory economics courses traditionally have been taught beginning at the sophomore level. That having been said, students who may experience difficulty learning economics in the large classes with limited access to the professor for assistance, at competing institutions, may succeed in our more individually responsive small classes with faculty ready to provide individual guidance and assistance both in and outside the classroom.

[d] Student outcomes including participation and successful-completion rates

Compared to the ACC average, the ECON program exhibits higher withdraw rates (23.6% versus 22.5% at Fall 2001), and also more D's and F's (11% versus 8.7% at Fall 2001). However, the withdraw rates in economics are far lower than other difficult subjects. (For example MATH 34.3%, Physics 31.4%, Biology 27.7% and Economics 23.6% at Fall 2001.) Action in the ECON program is not required.

[e] Measures of program quality and educational value added

The program administers the student "instructor survey" to all sections every Fall semester. The Fall 2004 results, which are fairly typical, show ECON section ratings in line with college-wide averages. This is a very positive indicator of program quality, since student evaluations of economics courses elsewhere are commonly somewhat below their college averages.

The ECON program administers a short list of achievement questions to all students at the end of every Fall semester. Most recent data is from Fall 2004 and student performance exceeds program standards for both ECON2301 and 2302, although Fall 2004 ECON2301 results are 1.2% below, and ECON2302 results 4.2% below, the prior year, which seems to be within normal year to year variation.

ACC ECON program faculty of long tenure report that many former students contact them to complement the training in ECON received at ACC, and no former students are critical. (Source: verbal reports from faculty at the departmental meeting of Feb. 11, 2005.)

The ECON faculty attends conferences, communicates with instructors at other colleges and evaluates new textbooks and other instructional materials. Individual faculty have the responsibility to select their own textbooks. By these activities, individual faculty become aware of desired changes in curriculum and instructional methods.

The ECON faculty has unusual diversity, including faculty from Russia and India, countries in Africa, women and blacks for example.

The ECON faculty searches for more accurate yet practical ways to measure program quality. This year the faculty is evaluating proposals to observe classroom performance and provide individualized feedback. Faculty also discusses other valid measures of program quality, including tracking the performance of past students or more revealing post-course achievement tests.

[f] Adequacy of program resources and efficiency of resource use

The general scale of the ECON program is about right, however there is evidence that enrollment is restrained by a shortage of ECON sections at Cyprus and Northridge campuses. In 2007, this situation can be corrected at Cyprus campus by earmarking some of the expanded capacity due on line to the ECON sections. However, at both Northridge and Cyprus, the ECON faculty does not recommend waiting several years to satisfy this demand for ECON instruction.

Obstacles to the use of modern technology definitely inhibit the use of technology in the ECON classrooms at ACC. These obstacles inappropriately diminish the quality of instruction. Most ACC ECON instructors want to expand the use of modern technology in their classrooms.

Program efficiency and effectiveness would be enhanced by an increase in the ratio of FT to Adjunct faculty. **The Self-Study team recommends the number of full time faculty be increased from 6 to 8.** Compared to other disciplines, the maintenance of minimum standards among Adjunct faculty is particularly difficult in economics, first because individuals trained in economics have available relatively high paying alternative employment compared to the faculty in many other disciplines, second because even introductory economics courses really do require qualified, committed, preferably experienced instructors if the courses are to be taught properly. It should also be mentioned that resources expended to improve the capability of our instructors is being used wastefully if spent on instructors who teach one course per semester rather than five (as is the case for Adjunct faculty), or who are of short tenure at ACC.

Program effectiveness will also be enhanced by increased resources for faculty development. The faculty improve through inspiration, experimentation and perspiration. Exposure to new ideas and knowledge is critical in maintaining the vibrancy and enthusiasm of the ECON faculty.

[g] Comparison of program performance, price, and enrollment with that of alternate local suppliers

The ECON program draws students from UT, Texas State and St. Edwards because of our relatively low tuition, transferability of our courses, geographical and temporal convenience of our schedules and our competitive course content.

[h] Direct and indirect program-related revenues and costs to the College

Viewing The ECON program as a financial enterprise, its courses are among the most profitable at the college, moreover careful scheduling might increase enrollment. By increasing ECON enrollment and at the same time reducing offerings in loss-producing programs elsewhere in the college, ACC's financial condition could be improved. (Data, #39h)

**5. AREA-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS (Workforce or Transfer)
(Not Applicable.)**

6. CONCLUSIONS

ECON is a strong, well staffed, efficiently managed program. It teaches ideas the mastery of which are crucial to a successful society and very useful in a successful individual life. Competing economics programs elsewhere do not compare favorably on a cost/value basis at this time. Some deterioration of our competitiveness in the near future can be prevented by increasing the number of full time faculty from the current 6 up to 8, improving the technology situation in the ECON program classrooms, devoting added resources to activities facilitating the evaluation and development of teacher effectiveness in the classroom, increasing the budget for faculty development (including the exchange of ideas at professional conferences) and by creating an honors microeconomics course to be offered once each year.

Competing distance learning programs are growing rapidly and pose a potential threat. Our strategy should be, first, to point out that most students learn more efficiently in conventional courses, at the same time emphasizing that ACC continues to offer quality courses at convenient times and places; second, to convert distance learning from threat to opportunity by seeing to it that ACC's ECON DL courses are second to none. This may be ensured by investing necessary faculty development resources to keep abreast of, and experiment with, the latest in rapidly evolving DL course delivery strategies for economics.

7. PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT

The ECON program will be staffed by 8 FT faculty and 10-15 Adjunct faculty, all of superior quality. These faculty will be excited by their mission and interested in sharing ideas for improved instruction in a collegial atmosphere, as is true today. The courses will be taught in classrooms which permit convenient access to the most modern classroom technology and techniques, and faculty will make regular use of the best instructional techniques available, unconstrained by limitations of classroom technology. The program will have respected systems in place to identify areas for potential improvement of instruction in a collegial atmosphere, and faculty will be active and interested in participation. The faculty will have lively and regular communication both with each other and with economists from other programs, permitting the exchange, discovery and evaluation of new ideas in economics and the instruction of economics. The ECON program will continue to develop and expand its distance learning program, always monitoring the latest in this fast-evolving field, with the goal of meeting or exceeding standards set in the best competing programs and, so far as possible, achieving results as good as those achieved in the regular classroom. And the faculty of the ECON program will hold its students to the highest possible standards of achievement, always resisting attempts to water down the course content.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Self-study team makes five recommendations for improving or maintaining the quality of the program. The recommendations are summarized here as detailed in the **Quality Improvement Plan**.

1. Increase number of full time faculty from current 6 up to 8.
2. Sharply increase the faculty development budget for economics.
3. Upgrade classroom technology.
4. Facilitate improved teacher effectiveness.
5. Implement honors microeconomics class.

9. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

None

10. APPENDICES (starting on next page)

Appendix A

Documents used in this report are listed in the body.

Appendix B
Instructional Program Review
Evaluation of Action Plans • Year Three
Program ECONOMICS
Date April 28, 2004

To what extent have the actions been completed?

Action Plan 1: Expand full-time faculty to eight members.

Action Plan: The Task Force should make a concerted effort to point out the advantages to teaching effectiveness in having enough full-timer faculty so that it is possible to distribute administrative functions to those who are most capable of doing a good job. Not every faculty member should serve on a committee, nor should all the faculty in a department serve on multiple committees.

The Task Force has been partially successful here. There are now six full-time faculty members now. There were five at the beginning of this action plan. The administrative functions are not as spread out as they might be but they are not that burdensome.

Action Plan 2: Increase the use of technology in classroom instruction over the next five years.

Action Plan: The Task Force should investigate ways in which technology can be moved directly into the classroom such as in-class laptop computer and in-class interactive teaching formats. In addition, most of the general assignments, lectures, etc. should be moved to a dedicated web page.

The distance learning courses have become much more Internet dependent. Blackboard is now being used to manage these courses and to administer on line exams and quizzes. Students can check their progress in the course by using the on-line grade book connected to Blackboard. Aplia.com is being used to assign and administer interactive homework assignments and economic experiments.

Because of lack of resources mainly, very little progress has been made "laptop computers and interactive teaching formats" into regular classrooms. And because of lack of interest amongst many faculty

members, there has been very little progress in getting syllabi, general assignments, and lectures onto dedicated web pages. A few faculty have responded by sending the department a digitized copy of their syllabi, and these have been posted to their own web sites by the department's administrative assistant.

Action Plan 3: Improve the evaluation process for all faculty in the department.

Action Plan: The Task Force should dedicate itself immediately to restoring the departmental evaluation process to an efficient level of operation. The evaluation process must insure that students receive a quality, up-to-date education delivered by dedicated teachers. Especially useful would be regular in-class visits, Task Force approval of varied syllabi, and feedback to make sure the teacher is following his-her own syllabus.

The implementation of this action plan has been fairly successful. Outlines for departmental syllabi have been adopted for both the Principles of Microeconomics and the Principles of Macroeconomics. These syllabi list the basic topics that must be offered in each course and require the inclusion of such basic information as office hours, required textbooks, and lecturing topics, reading assignments and testing outline. In addition, departmental questions are administered by every instructor in every section each fall.

The results of this evaluation have been very gratifying.

Action Plan 4: Improve the tracking procedure with regard to transfer students.

Action Plan: At present, we have no idea at all how well students who take our courses are actually doing at other institutions. The Task Force should investigate ways in which this situation might be remedied. At the very least, such a Tracking Committee should see what other departments have done in this area.

The Task Force has made no progress on this action plan. We still rely completely on the Institutional Effectiveness Office to track and report on the success of our students at four year colleges.

Action Plan 5: Improve inter-discipline and inter-institutional coordination.

Action Plan: The Economics Department exists as part of a matrix of disciplines within ACC. The College as an emerging institution exists is part of a matrix of institutions whose function is the formation of human capital in our students. Thus the department should appoint a committee to reach out to our sibling two- and four-year institutions in order to devise ways in which our course content and methods of instruction will improve student outcomes.

The Task Force has made very little progress on this action plan either. There seems to be a significant lack of enthusiasm for this type of coordination here or at the four-year institutions to which most of our students transfer. What little coordination that does exist is the result of force by the Coordinating Board of Higher Education of Texas.

1. Were any of the actions adjusted? If so, how?

No

1. Were any of the actions determined to be inappropriate? If so, why?

No

1. Were any actions added? If so, what?

No

1. As a result of your experience with the Year One Action Plans, what modifications do you plan to make to Years 3-4? (Please attach the revised plans to this report.)

None

Quality Improvement Plan for Program

Date Completed: 2-14-05

Recommendation #1

Increase number of full time faculty from current 6 up to 8.

Planned Implementation date: Winter-Summer 2005

Estimated Completion date: Fall 2005

Action/Task: Hire the needed faculty

Measure of Success/ Desired Outcome:

In summary, this will improve the uniformity and quality of the program and sharply reduce administrative burdens college wide on a per section basis. With respect to program enhancement for example, with FT faculty it is more cost effective to apply faculty development resources, to hire a faculty of high and more uniform quality, to identify and correct poor instruction, and to accomplish those many tasks which only FT faculty can be asked to perform. With respect to administrative burdens, Adjunct faculty are far more expensive to hire, develop and manage on a per/section basis.

Estimated Cost(s):

The total ongoing cost per year of this increase of 2 FT faculty is estimated at less than, probably far less than, \$27,000 per year per faculty member, or far less than \$54,000 per year for two, based on the following considerations:

It costs \$60,000 per year to pay one "fully loaded" FT faculty member, however the net cost of one additional FT ECON faculty member is less than appears because:

- 1) The college does not have to pay Adjunct faculty to teach 12 sections per year. The college assumes this direct expense to be \$2500 per course, which totals to \$30,000. We believe it may be more than this.
- 2) 12 courses per year may require as many as 6-8 or more Adjuncts during the year who must be brought on and off the payroll, processed onto and off the schedule (sometimes on short notice), simply responded to and interacted with as required for any employee, interviewed and evaluated for hire, and last but not least, evaluated and monitored for the quality of their teaching. These added costs are very significant. Consider the situation in the ECON program, for example, wherein it takes 20-22 Adjuncts to teach the same number of sections as 6 FT faculty, so it takes 4 Adjuncts to teach the courses of 1 FT faculty member, **and there is rollover of the names of these 4 Adjuncts from semester to semester**: in ECON to hire 16 Adjuncts every semester requires a "stable" of 20-25 Adjuncts (Source, James Sondgeroth, Chair), so a "stable" of 5-6 Adjuncts must be maintained to teach the classes of 1 FT faculty member.
 - 2a) The turnover is very low on the FT faculty, requiring an average of 1 new hire every three years to teach 30 ECON sections per year. For Adjuncts teaching the same number of sections, there is rollover in the stable of 20-25 Adjuncts requiring the interviewing and new hiring process for approximately 2 new Adjuncts each year. On a per course basis, this expense is therefore 6 times greater. Crudely estimating the total administrative cost of advertising, interview, evaluation, selection, orientation and new processing (including Human Resources expense) of a new faculty member at \$3600, using FT faculty in ECON this "hiring burden" is \$1200 per year or \$40 per section, but if Adjuncts are used, the corresponding burden is \$240 per section! Therefore, using FT faculty instead of Adjuncts reduces this cost component by \$200 per section, for an annual saving of \$2,400 per FT faculty member.
 - 2b) Like FT faculty, individual Adjuncts used every year must be evaluated every three years. They submit materials and then time is spent by the FT faculty, and the administration, evaluating the materials. In the case of FT faculty teaching 30 sections, 2 FT faculty must be evaluated every year, but in the case of Adjunct faculty teaching 30 sections, 5 Adjuncts must be evaluated every year, 2.5 times more on a per course basis! If we crudely estimate the cost of evaluating a faculty member at

\$1260, this amounts to \$30 per course for FT faculty, but \$75 per course if we use Adjuncts. Hiring one FT faculty saves the difference on 12 courses per year, for a total saving of \$540 per year.

- 2c) Each Adjunct generates far more difficulties per semester requiring special attention of the ECON Chair (Source, James Sondgeroth, Chair.) Since roughly 16 Adjuncts are teaching the same sections as 6 FT, the use of Adjuncts requires roughly three times the "trouble shooting burden" on a per course basis. We do not have the information to place a dollar value on this cost.
- 3) Full time faculty perform tasks essential to the long term success of a program which simply are not done, or not done well, if the number of FT faculty is too small. We do not attempt to place a dollar value on these missing activities, but they include faculty development, evaluation of new instructional methods, and direct services to students. An unfortunate example from the ECON program; one FT faculty slot was just cut from our budget. That faculty member was offering a tutoring service to all students in the program and this service had to be cut. The cost of this cut will fall on the students, and hit the college as higher student failure and withdrawal rates.

Consequence if not funded: Expensive administrative burden of Adjuncts versus FT faculty, a burden which is probably vastly underestimated; substantially diminished ECON program general effectiveness in the form of diminished quality, diminished uniformity and diminished ability to plan and compete.

Who is responsible? Administration

Recommendation #	2
Recommendation:	Sharp increase in faculty development budget for economics.
Planned Implementation date:	Spring-Summer 2005
Estimated Completion date:	Fall 2005
Action/Task	Increase the budget for faculty development
Measure of Success/ Desired Outcome	Faculty development enables the ECON faculty to discover, create, evaluate and implement new ideas. The ECON profession is developing new approaches to distance learning and to the conventional classroom. New subjects and ideas for content are evaluated. The exchange of ideas both within and beyond the college stimulates creative activity. The ECON faculty has a strong interest in exploring new ideas and implementing them in their teaching. This type of progress is essential to a vibrant environment for the transmission of learning. In recent years, faculty development has been gutted for budgetary reasons. The time may have come to restore and expand it.
Estimated Cost(s)	\$5000 per year.
Consequence if not funded	Economics faculty will continue to lag behind in this period of dynamic progress in teaching methods and knowledge about economic theory and behavior.
Who is responsible?	Administration

Recommendation # 3

Recommendation: Upgrade classroom technology.

Planned Implementation date: Fall 2005

Estimated Completion date: Fall 2007

Action/Task: Update classroom technology in all classrooms being used to teach economics

Measure of Success/ Desired Outcome: In successful ECON programs of today, ECON faculty may enter their classroom, turn on a computer and project images of the Internet, their computer screen, DVD movies, Power Point slides and conventional overheads. Students can capture images to their laptops. It is no longer necessary to plan in advance to “rent” a “media cart” provided it has not already been “rented” by another faculty member. It is no longer necessary to chew up the entire 10 minutes between classes, plus class time as well, returning the media cart, getting it out of a closet or getting or returning it from the office in the adjacent building. It is no longer necessary to take financial responsibility for the equipment, or fill out lengthy paperwork, or plan at least 2 days in advance just what technology will be used. Until eliminated, these characteristics of ACC’s current classroom technology system will continue to stand in the way of the spreading use of technology in our classrooms.

Estimated Cost(s):

If this is done right, the total cost is would be \$34,000, followed by a maximum of \$6,000 per year in the future for continuous maintenance and upgrade. This would properly equip and maintain 10 classrooms dedicated to the ECON program.

This estimate is based on the following considerations: It is assumed the administration can find a way to dedicate certain classrooms to the ECON program on a “first-call” basis. The ECON program teaches 60 sections spread among 10 locations with the bulk of the sections taught at 4-5 campuses, the “core locations”. Certain times of day are preferred by the students and this means 2 rooms are needed at most of the core campus locations. At the other locations, one properly equipped classroom would be sufficient. The long term goal would be that all ECON classrooms have the same modern technology, but 10 properly located classrooms would meet the needs of more than 90% of the ECON program students.

The cost of properly equipping a classroom is estimated at \$3,400. (Source: James Sondgeroth estimate.). The total cost of equipping 10 classrooms is therefore \$34,000.

In addition there must be an annual, ongoing classroom technology “maintenance/upgrade reserve” which we estimate at a maximum of \$600 per classroom, or a maximum of \$6,000 per year.

Consequence if not funded: Continued and increasingly antiquated classroom instructional methods and a gradual erosion of competitiveness of the ECON program.

Who is responsible? Administration

Recommendation #	4
Recommendation:	Facilitate improved teacher effectiveness.
Planned Implementation date:	Spring 2006 ongoing
Estimated Completion date:	Fall 2006
Action/Task	Design, test prototype, adopt and implement systems to better identify opportunities for instructional improvement, and better facilitate action on identified opportunities.
Measure of Success/ Desired Outcome	Adoption of revised systems
Estimated Cost(s)	Measured on a per course basis, this cost is far lower for FT faculty, since they teach three times as many sections each. For the FT faculty, the Self-study committee recommends an annual budget of \$500 per FT faculty, or \$3,000-\$4,000 total. (The Self-Study committee recommends against funding the program for Adjunct faculty in this planning cycle, because if Adjunct faculty are included, the cost balloons to \$10,000, also because ACC does not capture as much of the benefits due to the higher turnover of Adjunct faculty.)
Consequence if not funded	Faculty will remain at the current level of effectiveness.
Who is responsible?	James Sondgeroth, Chair of Social Sciences

Recommendation #	5
Recommendation:	Implement honors microeconomics class.
Planned Implementation date:	Spring 2005
Estimated Completion date:	Spring, 2006
Action/Task	Outline, develop, get administrative approval for, add to the annual schedule and begin teaching in Spring 2006.
Measure of Success/ Desired Outcome	The goal is to provide an outlet by which talented and committed students can be given the extra challenge and deeper understanding of ECON of which they are capable, without overburdening the regular students. Course offered often enough to meet student demand.
Estimated Cost(s)	\$2,500 per section taught, based on the following considerations: Once a year, one FT faculty member will teach one honors section with enrollment of 16, ½ the total for a standard course, which means this FT faculty member is not available to teach one of the regular courses, which must be taught by an Adjunct. ACC assumes the cost is \$2500 for an Adjunct to teach a course. (Source: Dean Rex Peebles.)
Consequence if not funded	Continued lack of appropriate accelerated introductory microeconomics course for bright and committed students.
Who is responsible?	Geoffrey Andron, Professor of economics

Quality Improvement Plan for Program

Date Completed: 2-14-05

Recommendation #1

Increase number of full time faculty from current 6 up to 8.

Planned Implementation date: Winter-Summer 2005

Estimated Completion date: Fall 2005

Action/Task: Hire the needed faculty

Measure of Success/ Desired Outcome:

In summary, this will improve the uniformity and quality of the program and sharply reduce administrative burdens college wide on a per section basis. With respect to program enhancement for example, with FT faculty it is more cost effective to apply faculty development resources, to hire a faculty of high and more uniform quality, to identify and correct poor instruction, and to accomplish those many tasks which only FT faculty can be asked to perform. With respect to administrative burdens, Adjunct faculty are far more expensive to hire, develop and manage on a per/section basis.

Estimated Cost(s):

The total ongoing cost per year of this increase of 2 FT faculty is estimated at less than, probably far less than, \$27,000 per year per faculty member, or far less than \$54,000 per year for two, based on the following considerations:

It costs \$60,000 per year to pay one "fully loaded" FT faculty member, however the net cost of one additional FT ECON faculty member is less than appears because:

- 1) The college does not have to pay Adjunct faculty to teach 12 sections per year. The college assumes this direct expense to be \$2500 per course, which totals to \$30,000. We believe it may be more than this.
- 2) 12 courses per year may require as many as 6-8 or more Adjuncts during the year who must be brought on and off the payroll, processed onto and off the schedule (sometimes on short notice), simply responded to and interacted with as required for any employee, interviewed and evaluated for hire, and last but not least, evaluated and monitored for the quality of their teaching. These added costs are very significant. Consider the situation in the ECON program, for example, wherein it takes 20-22 Adjuncts to teach the same number of sections as 6 FT faculty, so it takes 4 Adjuncts to teach the courses of 1 FT faculty member, **and there is rollover of the names of these 4 Adjuncts from semester to semester**: in ECON to hire 16 Adjuncts every semester requires a "stable" of 20-25 Adjuncts (Source, James Sondgeroth, Chair), so a "stable" of 5-6 Adjuncts must be maintained to teach the classes of 1 FT faculty member.
 - 2a) The turnover is very low on the FT faculty, requiring an average of 1 new hire every three years to teach 30 ECON sections per year. For Adjuncts teaching the same number of sections, there is rollover in the stable of 20-25 Adjuncts requiring the interviewing and new hiring process for approximately 2 new Adjuncts each year. On a per course basis, this expense is therefore 6 times greater. Crudely estimating the total administrative cost of advertising, interview, evaluation, selection, orientation and new processing (including Human Resources expense) of a new faculty member at \$3600, using FT faculty in ECON this "hiring burden" is \$1200 per year or \$40 per section, but if Adjuncts are used, the corresponding burden is \$240 per section! Therefore, using FT faculty instead of Adjuncts reduces this cost component by \$200 per section, for an annual saving of \$2,400 per FT faculty member.
 - 2b) Like FT faculty, individual Adjuncts used every year must be evaluated every three years. They submit materials and then time is spent by the FT faculty, and the administration, evaluating the materials. In the case of FT faculty teaching 30 sections, 2 FT faculty must be evaluated every year, but in the case of Adjunct faculty teaching 30 sections, 5 Adjuncts must be evaluated every year, 2.5 times more on a per course basis! If we crudely estimate the cost of evaluating a faculty member at

\$1260, this amounts to \$30 per course for FT faculty, but \$75 per course if we use Adjuncts. Hiring one FT faculty saves the difference on 12 courses per year, for a total saving of \$540 per year.

- 2c) Each Adjunct generates far more difficulties per semester requiring special attention of the ECON Chair (Source, James Sondgeroth, Chair.) Since roughly 16 Adjuncts are teaching the same sections as 6 FT, the use of Adjuncts requires roughly three times the "trouble shooting burden" on a per course basis. We do not have the information to place a dollar value on this cost.
- 3) Full time faculty perform tasks essential to the long term success of a program which simply are not done, or not done well, if the number of FT faculty is too small. We do not attempt to place a dollar value on these missing activities, but they include faculty development, evaluation of new instructional methods, and direct services to students. An unfortunate example from the ECON program; one FT faculty slot was just cut from our budget. That faculty member was offering a tutoring service to all students in the program and this service had to be cut. The cost of this cut will fall on the students, and hit the college as higher student failure and withdrawal rates.

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Who is responsible?	Geoffrey Andron, Professor of economics