

# **Academic Assessment Plan**

## **Bachelor of Arts in Economics (BAEcon)**

**AACSB Assurance of Learning Cycle: 2017-2021**

**Department of Economics, Sam M. Walton College of Business**

The Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree is offered through the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, with control of the economics curriculum by the Walton College of Business' Department of Economics. For the purpose of assessing this curriculum, Assurance of Learning will be conducted using the AACSB standards and established processes at the Walton College.

### **Program Goals and Learning Objectives**

#### **COMMUNICATION**

Graduates of the BAEcon program will be able to communicate effectively in professional situations.

*Learning Objective 1 (Written Comm):* Students will show proficiency in writing and producing a broad set of professional quality economics documents.

*Learning Objective 2 (Oral Comm):* Students will prepare and deliver professional presentations.

#### **CRITICAL THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING**

Graduates of the BAEcon program will be able to think critically when evaluating economic decisions.

*Learning Objective (CTPS):* Students will demonstrate critical thinking and strategic problem solving skills through systematic and objective consideration of economics related problems.

#### **TECHNICAL COMPETENCE (Discipline Knowledge)**

Graduates of the BAEcon program will be knowledgeable of the application of concepts in their economics major.

*Learning Objective (Major):* Students will demonstrate proficiency in their major-specific economics concepts.

## **Process for Assessing each Student Learning Outcome**

The Sam M. Walton College of Business' specialized accreditation through the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) outlines the standards of Assurance of Learning (AOL) in a 5-year cycle. During each cycle, the curriculum is managed by direct-measure analysis of demonstrated student learning toward goals and objectives defined by the faculty of the program at the start of the cycle. Each objective must be measured *at least* twice during a given cycle. Analysis of assessment data occurs following each measurement. Curricula changes must occur between measures and allow sufficient time for desired effect of curricular change to be detected in following measures.

The following plan of assessing the program's goals and objectives is set to accomplish these requirements within the college's current cycle of 2017-2021, with AACSB Continuous Program Improvement Review occurring in 2022.

### **Written Communication:**

Students in the BA Economics degree have a "senior writing requirement" which can be satisfied with a paper in any 3000-4000 (junior/senior) economics course. The requirements for this paper will be standardized to produce a document that can be more uniformly assessed with a common rubric.

### **Oral Communication:**

Once the senior writing requirement paper is complete, students will make a presentation to the Walton College Business Communication Center in a manner similar to the presentation by Walton College BSBA/BSIB students.

### **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:**

The standardized requirements for the senior writing paper will require that the topic be one in which the student can demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills. At the end of each academic year, Economics Department faculty will evaluate these aspects of the paper using the rubric used for other Walton college programs.

### **Technical Competence in Economics:**

BA Economics students are all required to take ECON 3033, Microeconomic Theory and ECON 3133, Macroeconomic Theory. A common element or assignment will be developed in each of these courses to assess the degree to which technical competence in economics is being achieved in this degree program.

### ***Means of assessment and desired level of student achievement***

All assessments are conducted using a sample of student artifacts in all sections of courses listed below, based on 20-25% of the previous AY's graduates, or a minimum of 20 artifacts.

Due to the limited number of students in this program, this sample will usually result in 100% student evaluation or collection of multiple semesters to achieve the desired minimum. Standards of Measure are subject to revision during the cycle to provide an opportunity to increase the program's desired standard.

In addition to the direct measures of student learning below, all objectives and general curricular concerns are evaluated using in-direct methods via periodic faculty and student focus groups.

**Written Communication:** Direct evaluation of student artifacts using Walton College Written Communication rubric conducted by the college's Business Communication Center staff, using a 3-rater process.

*Standard of Measure:* At least 80% of evaluations achieve a minimum level of 2 on the rubric for each criterion.

**Oral Communication:** Direct evaluation of student presentation skills (live or recorded) using the Walton College Oral Communication rubric.

*Standard of Measure:* At least 80% of evaluations achieve a minimum level of 2 on the rubric for each criterion.

**Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Direct evaluation of student artifacts using Walton College Critical Thinking and Problem Solving rubric.

*Standard of Measure:* At least 80% of evaluations achieve a minimum level of 2 on the rubric for each criterion.

**Technical Competence:** Analysis of outcomes of common elements or assignments in ECON 3033 and ECON 3133. Method of assessment (rubric, exam sub-scores, or other) are to be determined through faculty discussion in the near future.

*Standard of Measure:* To be determined once final method is selected/developed.

### ***Reporting of results***

All objective analyses are reported in aggregate (no student or faculty identifiers) following the semester assessed. Reports are delivered to and discussed with the Department of Economics Undergraduate Committee and Department Chair. The chair and representatives disseminate the reports for discussion with program faculty regarding curricular improvements needed.

The Dean of Walton College receives a report on the outcomes and curricular improvements resulting from assessment and periodic updates through committees regarding the overall status of the Assurance of Learning process.

At the end of each AACSB Continuous Program Improvement Review cycle, Assurance of Learning activities conducted and curricular management that occurred as a result of data during the cycle are comprehensively reported in the college's report to AACSB prior to peer review.