

Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC)

University Curriculum Forum

Undergraduate Program Review Report: Economics and Finance – School of Business

March 18, 2010

The Economics and Finance Department in the School of Business submitted a self-study report to UCF – PRAC on February 24, 2010. The self-study covered Standards 1-17 of the Academic Program Review document. PRAC reviewed all submitted materials and met with Dr. Samuel Andoh, the Economics and Finance Department’s assessment coordinator, and Dr. James Thoreson for discussion on March 4, 2010. Substantial revisions of the self-study were noted and discussed. The nature of these revisions was such that appropriate revision could not be reasonably expected in one week. PRAC made it known to Dr Andoh and Dr. Thoreson that PRAC would make the recommendation of **conditional approval**, which would mean Economics and Finance would have 11 additional months to make revisions.

PRAC commends the work done so far by the Economics and Finance Department and has made the following suggestions for revision of Standards 1-17:

Standard 1: The department/program’s mission supports the university’s mission

Economics and Finance state both the university’s and department’s mission.

Recommendation: Provide the source of the department’s mission statement (it is in quotes).

Recommendation: Move statement that the “department provides atmosphere for faculty to grow professionally” and the seminar series is provided to another section since we are not sure if that level of detail should be here.

Recommendation: Make the links between the two missions clearer. As it stands, the two missions seem separate.

Standard 2: The department/program has clearly state program goals and objectives

Does provide list of what program intends students to learn based on participation in the program

Recommendation: Need to add statement(s) about what the program intends to do as goals.

Recommendation: Tease apart economics and finance goals and objectives more clearly. For example, what are the similarities and differences in the goals and objectives of economics and finance?

Standard 3: The department/program has clearly stated program-level expected student outcomes and methods for measurement

Lists the learning outcomes in a table from standard 2 – good.

Recommendation: Need to identify assessment strategy (random sample of material, test all majors take, rubrics identified for assessing student learning). Both direct and indirect

measures are missing from the self-study (even as a plan). Moving in the right direction with this, but needs more details about plans, assessment strategies, rubrics, and evidence of student outcomes. Some ideas for Direct Measures – the ETS major field test seems appropriate, need some idea of rubrics used for Topics course (ECO 499/FIN 499 and other courses listed) also why are the same courses listed under indirect and direct measures.

Recommendation: Need more detail about specific student work and how it is to be evaluated. Unclear how department will know whether students have achieved the learning outcomes identified. Standard 3 needs some elaboration including the articulation of a specific strategy for this measurement process and some details on exactly what type of student work will be looked at and how it will be evaluated (i.e., the grading scheme, if you will or rubric). How will the department/program know if a student has “learned”?

Recommendation: May want to refer to the indirect measures like student satisfaction surveys etc.

Standard 4: Uses student learning data to improve programs

Recommendation: Moving i. ii and iii to the goals (standard 2)

Recommendation : Moving the department’s **plans** to use ETS Major Field Test to standard 3.

Recommendation: Elaborating on the last sentence regarding the Fed challenge in this section instead of referring the reader to Appendix 2. They could also move the ETS tracking data listed as part of standard 16 to this section.

Standard 5: Evidence of quality instruction

Has summary of course eval forms for eco and for finance

Missing: Summary of how assignment relate to outcomes

Missing: 5 or more syllabi

Recommendation: Information about students accomplishments could be moved to standard 10.

Standard 6: The department/program provides evidence of a coherent and current curriculum

Questions: How does the curriculum align with standards in the field? Is there a sequence to the courses that shows how one course builds on another in order to provide the students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required? (This could be shown with a matrix or diagram and explanation of how it works.)

Recommendation: Needs more information here, more specific detail about how courses are linked to form coherent curriculum. Information about courses and links between them would be welcome detail. Reference is made to how curriculum is commensurate with other universities, but again documentation/detail of how that is the case would be welcome. A curriculum map (such as shown in Standard 3) would be helpful.

Recommendation: Further articulation of the relationship between undergraduate and graduate programs would be welcome.

Standard 7: The department has an appropriate number of qualified faculty, students and staff

Has – information about program viability and faculty participation

Missing: List of faculty and their CVS

Missing: Information about how faculty are being utilized to accomplish goals of department

Missing: Number of adjunct faculty and some description of expertise

Missing: Any information about students (recruitment – where do students come from? Demographics? Awards?)

Missing: Any information about support staff

Missing: Idea of what would be the optimal number of faculty and students?

Standard 8: The department provides high quality student advisement and maintains adequate tracking procedures of its students

Missing: Number of faculty advisors and the student/faculty advising ratio

Missing: Office hours

Missing: Semester by semester sequence

Missing: Advisement forms, handouts

Missing: Information about students progress through program – is this the department secretary?

Missing: Sense of the faculties involvement in advising process. Might want to point out faculty contributions here.

Recommendation: Think about how to address the problems identified in advising when students enter into program late in undergraduate career.

Standard 9: The department/program offers an appropriate number of courses and sections to meet the needs of students. Statistical data concerning admissions, graduations, courses offered and cancelled, and other relevant statistics are provided and analyzed

Has information here.

Missing: Number of majors and graduate rates.

Clarify: What does this mean: “downward trend in number of students taking our W courses, while the size of our W sections shows an increasing trend.”

Observation: Less than 50% of majors feel sequence of courses is adequate – look for this in standard 16 and standard 17 as an area for improvement and part of 5-year plan

Standard 10: A climate of intellectual/professional curiosity and achievement among faculty and students

Has evidence of climate.

Recommendation: Include information on internships/collaborations/ conference presentations that students are taken to, active scholarly clubs/organizations.

Consider: How will the creation of Economics as a BA program in Arts and Sciences impact the climate of intellectual/professional curiosity in the Economics and Finance department in the School of Business?

Any plans to enhance this? Any strengths? Weaknesses? Challenges?

Standard 11: Evidence of research, scholarship, and/or creative activity by students and faculty

Information is provided here.

Recommendation: Can obtain information from the FAAR report (if haven't already done so).

Standard 12: The department/library has adequate library resources to meet its needs

Good section from Diane Tomasko about current situation and future projections

Recommendation: Prepared FY 2004-2008. Might want to get updated report from library.

Standard 13: The department/program has adequate facilities and non-print resources such as audio-visual, computers, labs, practica to meet its needs

Recommendation: Case could be made that is even stronger ... maybe something about how the facilities issues adversely affect the mission, goals, etc of the department?

Standard 14: the department periodically engages in review and evaluation

Summary of Student Survey (but unclear how was this obtained, from whom, etc)

Missing: Narrative description of how information was obtained

Missing: Narrative description of improvements made or planned based on the results of student survey

Missing: Frequency of follow up

Questions: What are other mechanisms whereby the department/program reviews itself?

For example, committees in the department? The Assessment coordinator's role? How is feedback received by faculty?

Standard 15: The department's activity in community service and outreach is appropriate to the mission of the program and the university

Good – could be more specific about how each activity supports/or is appropriate to the mission of program and university.

Standard 16: The department provides an analysis of program strength and weaknesses

Areas for improvement are identified.

Recommendation: Areas for improvement should be tied back to the various standards reviewed if possible. For example, what in the report has pointed to a need for new degree programs or for innovative course features? Areas for improvement should be tied to areas of weakness identified in the report. Not to be mistaken, there are good ideas for improvement offered here, but there could be more background. For example, that “course offerings should be expanded to fulfill students’ needs in other departments” –Not sure this particular idea would have been anticipated from reading the report.

There is a goal stated that “department of Economics will become a major source of well-trained graduates to the local business, nonprofit, and public sectors...” what is currently a barrier to this? What does the department perceive as a challenge to overcome in attaining this? (if any).

What process has informed the department that the courses need updating? Or that there is a limited choice in courses/professors? Need to bring this out more in the report.

How does the department know that graduating students “do not get any employment or graduate school related services at the Department” – was this reported in one of the surveys?

Recommendation: The ETS tracking information could have gone into standard 14 and also standard 3 and 4.

Standard 17: The department describes a vision and action plan for the future

Recommendation: Overall align the vision and action plan in a deliberate way with the mission and goals of the department and the strengths and weaknesses identified through the self-study. All of these goals for the future are admirable, but in some ways unanticipated by the report. Confident that as the report is revised, the vision and action plan for future will be better supported by the report narrative.