

California State University, Fresno

Craig School of Business

Economics

Department/Program Assessment Coordinator: Kevin Capehart

Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)

I. Mission Statement

Advancing economic understanding is the mission of the Department of Economics. The study of economic ideas and theories, the attainment of economic literacy and economic reasoning are fundamental elements of a liberal arts education. Acquiring proficiency in economics is a necessary component of active citizenship. Thus, the Department's objective is to ensure that students acquire the ability to reason analytically regarding economic issues, theories and institutions.

II. Institutional Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes/Goals, and SLO's [a,b,c]

A. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

The university's ILOs, per Fresno State's assessment website at <http://fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/fresno-state-assessment.html>, are as follows. Students who graduate from California State University, Fresno will demonstrate the importance of discovery, diversity, and distinction by:

1. **developing a foundational, broad and integrative knowledge** of the humanities, the arts, the sciences, and social sciences, and their integration with their major field of study. Students will consolidate learning from different fields and explore the concepts and questions that bridge those essential areas of learning. Graduate students will articulate the significance, implications and challenges within their field in a societal and global context. In fields in which interdisciplinarity is fundamental, graduate students will further draw from the perspectives of other domains of inquiry/practice so as to assess a problem better and offer solutions to it.
2. **acquiring specialized knowledge** as identified by program learning outcomes in their major field. Students will demonstrate expertise in a specialized area of study, including integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice. Graduate students will demonstrate further mastery of the field's theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry. They will also show the ability to assess major contributions to the field, as well as expand on those contributions through empirical research or aesthetic exploration.
3. **improving intellectual skills** including critical thinking, effective oral and written communication, information literacy and quantitative reasoning. Students will demonstrate fluency via application of these skills to everyday problems and complex challenges. Graduate students will hone these skills further, demonstrating coherent arguments, analysis, insight,

creativity, and acumen as they address local, regional, and global issues in their respective fields of study.

4. **applying knowledge** by integrating theory, practice, and problem solving to address real world issues using both individual and team approaches. Students will apply their knowledge in a project, paper, exhibit, performance, or other appropriate demonstration that links knowledge and skills acquired at the university with those from other areas of their lives. Graduate students will integrate knowledge and skills from coursework, practicum, and research to address critical issues in their field and demonstrate advanced application of knowledge through a culminating experience that validates, challenges, and/or expands the profession's body of knowledge.

5. **exemplifying equity, ethics, and engagement.** Students will form and effectively communicate their own evidence-based and reasoned views on public issues, interact with others to address social, environmental and economic challenges, apply knowledge of diversity and cultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in the classroom and the community, value the complexity of ethical decision making in a diverse society, acknowledge the importance of standards in academic and professional integrity, and demonstrate honesty, tolerance, and civility in social and academic interactions. Building upon this at the graduate level, students will apply these values in the creation of scholarly and/or aesthetic works that enrich the human experience.

B. Program Learning Outcomes (also known as Goals) and related SLOs

The Economics program's goals and associated SLOs are as follows.

1. **Goal 1: Economic competencies** – Mastery of the descriptive, conceptual, and analytic processes necessary to understand the nature of economic systems, their functioning and their dynamic properties.
 - a. SLO 1.1: For general education courses, students will describe the flows of goods, services, resources, expenditures and incomes in the US and global economies and their component markets and sectors.
 - b. SLO 1.2: For general education courses, students will explain how price signals lead to resources allocation in a market economy.
 - c. SLO 1.3: For general education courses, students will identify the trade-offs faced at all levels of economic activity.
 - d. SLO 1.4: For upper division courses, students will interpret the assumptions behind different economic perspectives or paradigms.
 - e. SLO 1.5: For upper division courses, students will apply/use the formal language and concepts of the discipline (theory & praxis) to issues of contemporary and historical relevance.
2. **Goal 2: Analytic competence** – Students will learn the methods of quantitative analysis and statistical techniques, empirical methods, and hypothesis testing. Students will obtain mastery of analytical methods of various models and dominant paradigms through comparative analysis, the application of statistical techniques, comparative static analysis and dynamic methods, models, and theories.

- a. SLO 2.1: Students will apply formal logical, statistical, and econometric analyses, in order to evaluate a wide array of hypotheses, qualitative- and quantitative evidence and interpret the results.
- 3. **Goal 3: Critical thinking** – Students will be able to think critically and evaluate a full range of social issues. Students will demonstrate advanced thinking by testing core received ideas and “conventional wisdoms” as advanced in the present historical context and over the past two hundred and fifty years.
 - a. SLO 3.1: Students will evaluate contrasting models/paradigms to identify key points of consensus and divergence on issues of contemporary and/or historical relevance.
- 4. **Goal 4: Communication skills**– Ability to present complex economic arguments and concepts; capability of explaining and articulating economic analyses; proficiency in accurate oral and written communication. Ability to identify and use appropriate and relevant sources and to explain economic ideas and concepts to both specialist and general audiences. Students will be able to clearly communicate key information with the aid of graphs, tables, formulas, models and other quantitative measures, or formal mathematical concepts.
 - a. SLO 4.1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in writing knowledgeably, coherently, and persuasively on an array of conceptual and/or real, contemporary and/or historical topics related to the discipline.
 - b. SLO 4.2: Students will demonstrate proficiency in delivering a persuasive and professional oral presentation that clearly articulates economic concepts in tackling a topic related to the discipline.
- 5. **Goal 5: Application of economics**– Students will learn to apply economic analyses. Applications of knowledge, including core theoretical concepts, to a broad range of social issues. Application of economic analysis, or simulations of actual applications.
 - a. SLO 5.1: Students will practice independent economic research, including—but not limited to—use of professional and scholarly resources, secondary source materials, and statistical/econometric analyses.
- 6. **Goal 6: Social awareness and responsibility** – To acquire an understanding of a diverse and complex society, and an increasingly integrated global environment. To play a leadership role based upon informed, balanced and reflective decision-making in a full range of social contexts, including the workplace and civil society. To acquire a comprehensive analysis and understanding of social stratification, the determination of policy decision and processes and the dynamic and institutional properties of economies other than the U.S. through courses emphasizing international content and context.
 - a. SLO 6.1: Students will identify the economic causes and consequences of social stratification and describe the policy decisions/processes used to address these.
 - b. SLO 6.2: Students will examine the risks and rewards of globalized economic activity and ecological and environmental challenges from multiple perspectives.

III. Curriculum Map [d]: Courses in which SLO’s are addressed and evaluated

| Course / SLO: | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 6.2 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Econ 25 Intro Econ | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | | I | I |
| Econ 40 P/Micro | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | | I | I |
| Econ 50 P/Macro | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | I | | I | I |
| Econ 100A Int Micro | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | | D | D | |
| Econ 100B Int Macro | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | | D | D | D |
| Econ 101 Hist Thght | | | | D | D | | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 102W Expl Lit | | | | D | D | | D | D | D | | D | D |
| ECON 103 Intro Biz Cycles | | | | D | D | | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 110 US Econ/Hist | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 111 Euro/Econ/Hist | D | D | | D | D | | D | | | | D | D |
| Econ 114 Econ Dev/Poor | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 115T Tpc Historical/Political Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 117 Environ Econ | | | | D | D | | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 119 Urban/Regional Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | | | D | | |
| Econ 120 Women/Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | D |
| Econ 123 Econometrics | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 125 Intro/Math Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | | | | | |
| Econ 131 Public Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 135 Money/Bank | | | | D | D | D | D | | | D | | |
| Econ 144 Econ/Sports | | | | I | I | I | I | | | I | | |

| Course / SLO: | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 6.2 |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Econ 146 Econ/Crime | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D |
| Econ 150 Labor Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 152 Human Res | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | | D | D | |
| Econ 162 Health Econ | D | D | D | | D | D | D | | | D | D | |
| Econ 167 Contem Econ Prob | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D | I/D |
| Econ 178 Int Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 179 Intl Pol Econ | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 181 Pol Econ/L Am | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 183 Pol Econ/Mid East | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Econ 185 Directed Readings | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 188T Tpcs Macro | | | | D | D | | D | | | D | | |
| Econ 189T Tpcs Micro/Intl | | | | D | D | D | D | | | D | D | D |
| Econ 190 Ind Study | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 191 Internship | | | | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | | |
| Econ 192 Senior Project | M | M | M | M | M | M | M | M | M | M | M | M |

For courses in the major, using the abbreviations below, indicate which outcomes are introduced, which are developed, and which are mastered in that particular course.

I = Introduced

D = Developed

M=Mastered

IV. SLO's Mapped to Assessment Measures and Methods [e]

| Assessment Measure | Evaluation Method | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 6.2 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Direct | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing asgmt. | Rubric | | | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Verbal pres. | Rubric | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Data analysis asgmt. | Rubric | | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Policy/issue analysis asgmt. | Rubric | | | | | X | | | | | X | X | X |
| Multi-paradigmatic analysis asgmt. | Rubric | | | | X | X | | X | | | | | |
| Senior exam | Rubric or other criteria | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X |
| Principles exam | Rubric or other criteria | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X |
| Indirect | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Senior survey | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | |
| Senior focus groups | | | | | | | X | | X | X | | | X |

V. Assessment Measures: Description of Assignment and Method (rubric, criteria, etc.) used to evaluate the assignment [f]

A. Direct Measures, where the department/program must use a minimum of three different direct measures)

1. **Writing assignment:** An individually assessed, course embedded writing assignment aligned with SLO 4.1 and evaluated with a rubric (or rubrics) aligned with that SLO and any other SLOs being simultaneously evaluated. Of note, the Craig School’s accreditors consider group assignments that aren’t assessed at an individual level to be an indirect (not a direct) measure, hence the explicit clarification of an *individually* assessed assignment here and below. The course in which the assignment is embedded and/or the assignment may vary for principled and practical reasons, as long as the assignment is aligned with the SLO(s) being evaluated. The writing assignment does not have to be the write up for a data analysis, policy/issue analysis, or multi-paradigmatic analysis assignment, although opportunities to use one assignment to assess multiple SLOs are encouraged. The writing assignment also does not have to involve research in the sense of SLO 5.1, but if there is research in the sense of SLO 5.1 involved, then that SLO should be assessed, too, and it should be assessed using a rubric; similarly if research is involved in the other assignments elaborated upon below.

2. **Verbal presentation:** An individually assessed, course embedded verbal presentation aligned with SLO 4.2 and evaluated with a rubric (or rubrics) aligned with that SLO and any other SLOs being simultaneously evaluated. The course in which the presentation is embedded and/or the parameters of the presentation may vary for principled and practical reasons, as long as the presentation is aligned with the SLO(s) being evaluated. The presentation does not have to be based on a writing, data analysis, policy/issue analysis, or multi-paradigmatic analysis assignment, although opportunities to use one assignment to assess multiple SLOs are encouraged.

4. **Data analysis assignment:** An individually assessed, course embedded assignment that involves analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data in a manner aligned with SLO 2.1 and evaluated with a rubric (or rubrics) aligned with that SLO and any other SLOs being simultaneously evaluated. The course in which the assignment is embedded and/or the parameters of the assignment may vary for principled and practical reasons, as long as the assignment is aligned with the SLO(s) being evaluated. The data analysis assignment does not have to be associated with a writing, verbal presentation, policy/issue analysis, or multi-paradigmatic analysis assignment, although opportunities to use one assignment to assess multiple SLOs are encouraged.

5. **Policy/issue analysis assignment:** An individually assessed, course embedded assignment that involves analysis of a policy or other issues of contemporary or historical relevance in a manner aligned with at least SLOs 1.5 and 5.1 and potentially also aligned with other SLOs. A policy or other issue that relates to SLOs 6.1 and/or 6.2 would be useful for assessment purposes, for example. The assignment is evaluated with a rubric (or rubrics) aligned with the relevant SLOs. The course in which the assignment is embedded and/or the parameters of the assignment may vary for principled and practical reasons, as long as the assignment is aligned with the SLO(s) being evaluated. The policy/issue analysis assignment does not have to be associated with a writing, verbal presentation, data analysis, or multi-paradigmatic analysis assignment, although opportunities to use one assignment to assess multiple SLOs are encouraged.

6. **Multi-paradigmatic analysis assignment:** An individually assessed, course embedded assignment that involves perspective taking from multiple economic paradigms in the sense of SLOs 1.4, 1.5, and 3.1. The assignment is evaluated with a rubric (or rubrics) aligned with the relevant SLOs. The course in which the assignment is embedded and/or the parameters of the assignment may vary for principled and practical reasons, as long as the assignment is aligned with the SLO(s) being evaluated. The multi-paradigmatic analysis assignment does not have to be associated with a writing, verbal presentation, data analysis, or policy/issue analysis assignment, although opportunities to use one assignment to assess multiple SLOs are encouraged. So, for example, an assignment that involves researching, writing about, and presenting upon a policy or other issue related to SLOs 6.1 or 6.2 from multiple theoretical perspectives and using some data analysis could be used to simultaneously assess several SLOs.

7. **Senior exam:** An individually assessed exam to be given to the ECON 192 Senior Project students, where each question is clearly aligned with an SLO. To “close the loop” over the next few years, the exam should be given once, process or curriculum changes informed by those results should be made, and the same or similar assessment exercise should be conducted again. The exam will be piloted in Spring 2025.

8. **Principles exam:** An individually assessed exam to be given to ECON 40 and 50 students towards the end of the semester or upper division (e.g., ECON 100A and ECON 100B) students towards the beginning of the semester, where each question is clearly aligned with an SLO. If given in an upper division course, a key question to ask would be whether students took their principles courses at Fresno State or not. A version of such an exam has been implemented before as part of the pre/post assessment discussed in past SOAPs and assessment reports.

B. Indirect Measures, where the department/program must use a minimum of one indirect measure

1. **Senior survey:** The department has surveyed ECON 192 Senior Project students for a number of years and plans to continue to do so for the information provided by such surveys. Some survey questions were designed to align with and indirectly assess some SLOs. The survey questions may evolve over time, but continuing to have some questions aligned with and indirectly assessing some SLOs is encouraged.

2. **Senior focus groups:** Along with the above-mentioned survey that students fill out individually, the department has conducted focus groups with ECON 192 Senior Project students for a number of years and plans to continue to do so for the information provided by those focus group sessions. The focus group questions may evolve over time, but continuing to have some questions aligned with and indirectly assessing some SLOs is encouraged.

VI. Assessment Schedule/Timeline [g]

| Academic Year | Measure | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 6.2 |
|---------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2023-2024 | Writing asgmt., Verbal pres., Senior survey Focus groups | | | | X | | | | X | X | X | | |
| 2024-2025 | Writing asgmt., Verbal pres., Data analysis asgmt., Policy/issue analysis asgmt., Multi-paradigm analysis asgmt., Principles exam, Senior exam, Senior survey, Focus groups | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2025-2026 | Principles exam, Senior survey, Focus groups | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2026-2027 | Writing asgmt., Verbal pres., Data analysis asgmt., Policy/issue analysis asgmt., Multi-paradigm analysis asgmt., Senior exam, Senior survey, Focus groups | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2027-2028 | Principles exam, | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

| Academic Year | Measure | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 6.2 |
|---------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Senior survey, Focus groups | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2028-2029 | Writing asgmt., Verbal pres., Data analysis asgmt., Policy/issue analysis asgmt., Multi-paradigm analysis asgmt., Senior exam, Senior survey, Focus groups | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2029-2030 | Principles exam, Senior survey, Focus groups | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2030-2031 | Writing asgmt., Verbal pres., Data analysis asgmt., Policy/issue analysis asgmt., Multi-paradigm analysis asgmt., Senior exam, Senior survey, Focus groups | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

VII. Closing the Loop [h,j,k]

Fresno State Closing the Loop process is described immediately below.

A major assessment report, which focuses on assessment activities carried out the previous academic year, is submitted in September of each academic year and evaluated by the Learning Assessment Team and Director of Assessment at Fresno State.

Program/Department Closing the Loop process:

The Economics Department, in conjunction with its mission statement and with the mission statement of Fresno State, implements assessment as part of an iterative process. This process involves continuously evaluating student learning outcomes using course embedded assignments, reviewing and discussing the data generated, and making necessary and appropriate changes to the assessment measures and curriculum as warranted by the results. The department, as well as a department standing committee related to assessment, discusses all assessment scores and patterns regarding strengths and weaknesses of our majors in department meetings. Proposed changes to assignments or to the curriculum are also discussed by the department prior to submitting any course or curriculum change proposals to the College and University Curriculum Committees.