



## Program Assessment Report (PAR)

Social + Applied Economics (SAE) Masters Degree

REPORT PREPARED by: Beauchamp, Andrew

ACADEMIC YEAR COVERED BY THIS REPORT: [AcademicYear]

### I. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

WSU-Masters Learning Objectives 1. Students will use economic models in domestic and global contexts to analyze individual decision making, how prices and quantities are determined in product and factor markets, and macroeconomic outcomes 2. Students will analyze the performance and functioning of government, markets and institutions in the context of social, economic and ecological problems. 3. Students will use critical thinking skills to examine different microeconomic models, evaluating their assumptions, implications and applications. 4. Students will identify salient developments in the world economy, in both present-day and historical contexts. 5. Students will demonstrate the use of mathematical and statistical skills in the analysis of complex economic problems and to make use of those skills in their future careers. 6. Students will communicate economic thought and analysis in both written and oral contexts to varied audiences.

### II. PROCEDURES USED FOR ASSESSMENT

#### A. Direct Assessment

We used indirect measures listed below.

#### B. Scoring of Student Work

We used an indirect survey measure for these responses. This included our attempt to recruit all graduated students in the recent past.

### C. Indirect Assessment

This year we launched our first indirect measure of student achievement via an online Qualtrics survey which asks students to rate their learning on the five program learning objectives. Responses were recorded on a five point scale.

## III. ASSESSMENT RESULTS/INFORMATION:

### 1. Economics Alumni Survey

Summary Overall the data revealed specific areas in which students would like to see program level changes, which is quite helpful. Our consistent finding across all years surveyed was that students believed they learned the most with regard to learning objective three and the least with regard to learning object five.

For all learning outcomes we split the sample among those graduating in the past three academic years and those who graduated before that to ensure that past performance wasn't driving the conclusions. As we move forward administering this survey for each graduating cohort, we'll gain more real-time information.

Analysis The total sample size was 37 response (14 from last three years 23 from earlier years). We use a three-year rolling average to see how program outcomes are changing over time, comparing the most recent three years the three years prior to that. We report both the updated and last year results below for comparison.

Year	LO 1	LO 2	LO 3	LO 4	LO 5	LO 6
2022 Graduate	0.857	0.609	0.714	0.652	0.929	0.826
2021 Graduate	0.857	0.565	0.643	0.348	0.714	0.522
2021 Undergraduate	0.667	0.630	0.733	0.667	0.933	0.630
2020 Undergraduate	0.867	0.630	0.333	0.519	0.667	0.556

From 2021: "we note that the gaps for LO3 and LO5 in the Table 1 are statistically significant, suggesting a meaningful change in the past three years with regard to our students learning on those outcomes." The 2022 data reveal a striking reversal of our performance n LO5 which is very rewarding to see given the emphasis we received in individual comments regarding the desire to strengthen our focus on data analysis. We've also been doing a better job on LO3 which focuses on microeconomic models. Our microeconomics instructor at the graduate level is very highly regarded by students as being both difficult and teaching students a lot, which is likely revealing itself in these upward trends.

[Analysis]

## IV. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

We plan to discuss this just completed survey at our first faculty meeting of the next calendar year. Major topics to discuss are differences between master's and undergraduate responses, the need for more data analysis courses and how we can improve our core courses and elective offerings to better align with student needs. Additionally, I plan to make changes to the scheduling of courses, teaching assignments and course offerings that are consistent with the goals of

improving student learning outcomes. In particular we have added math for economists as a summer elective and also assigned a different faculty member to teach the economic problems seminar in hopes of making it more research and data analysis focused. Our goal is to make improvements at the margin and not lose anything in terms of the high quality program we're offering.

## **V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Additional documentation, when provided, is stored in the internal Academic Program Assessment of Student Learning SharePoint site.