ACADEMIC AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO AND OPERATIONS REVIEW

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM PHASE 1 TEMPLATE

Name of school/college: Albers School of Business and Economics
Name of department/program: Department of Economics
Date: June 16, 2016

Introduction

As the school/college reviews and builds out data sets provided by the university, it will also solicit, in a manner appropriate to the organization and culture of that school/college, the information needed from departments or programs for well-informed analysis and recommendations. Such material falls into two categories:

1. Workload and operations information that is held (or largely held) within the department/program rather than the school/college or central university data sources, such as faculty service performed within the department/program.
2. Information, perspectives, and concerns that the department/program believes should be considered as part of the broader review, such as challenges inherent to teaching within a particular discipline.

The questions below reflect the baseline information that meets the criteria above. Schools and colleges should feel free to add to these questions as appropriate. Please note that this template is part of the Workload and Operations phase; each department/program will have another opportunity to provide information relevant to the Portfolio Review.

Department/Program Review

Please address the questions below and add whatever information deemed relevant to this process.

To the extent that this information is not already available in the template for your school or college, advise regarding the parts of the workload for your faculty not captured by course load and credit generation measures. In particular, if there is any research/scholarship/creative work or service that distinguishes the contributions of the faculty in this department or program from others in the school/college and university, please describe it.

Response:

1. Faculty of the Department of Economics face high expectations for scholarship and teaching to maintain Faculty Qualification standards for AACSB accreditation. Many of the Economics faculty have published in top journals and as a whole have maintained 100% qualification status. It can take a full year for an article to go through the first review and longer than two years for journal articles to get published in economics; so it is critical for economics faculty to constantly be tending to scholarship, but not at the cost of reduced teaching quantity and quality.
2. Economics faculty regularly present research at top conferences to help the vetting process of their research. The publication process generally includes attending and presenting at academic

conferences to improve the quality of the research enabling shorter review times and higher quality publications.

3. Economics faculty regularly present at the Albers Scholarship Seminar Series that occurs every other week during the academic year. Students are invited to attend economics faculty research seminars so they can better understand what professional economics research entails.
4. Economics faculty members regularly present their research to professional groups because their research is often applied to relevant policy issues. Examples include the U.S. Civil Right Commission, the Seattle Economists Council, Seattle Public Utilities, and Albers Breakfast Insights.
5. Most economics faculty present a version of their research in upper level economics courses. The process of mixing research with teaching is used as a tool to better understand applications of economics and the research process.
6. It is relatively common for economics faculty to work on research with students, which takes additional time to help students grasp the research process. At least three members of the Economics faculty are working on research or are publishing with students on an ongoing basis. This is another way Economics faculty mix research and teaching, but at a cost.
7. Economics faculty helps establish and maintain internships for students. The Department of Economics has placed multiple students per year in internships that have been created from professional connections.
8. The Department of Economics offers a specialization in International Economic Development. The IED specialization requires that a portion of our faculty engage in research and teaching related to developing countries, which requires travel and data collection under difficult conditions. Maintaining this line of research and teaching places higher resource burdens on the faculty engaged in the IED specialization.
9. Many members of the Department of Economics faculty serve on committees and receive research fellowships that grant them course release time. This is partly the nature of economics being applicable to many fields and the service interests of faculty. More detail is given regarding this in point 2 below.
10. The combination of high expectations for teaching and research, publishing and presenting scholarship requirements, applied policy based research, working with students, providing internships, research abroad, and the broad range of service requirements creates a need for additional resources to free up faculty time. Travel and maintaining contacts is both expensive and time consuming, having additional faculty would help spread this load and maintain a high level of research and teaching.

Is there information that needs to be considered as a part of an analysis of the "teaching productivity" of the department or program? Are there differentiators in the kinds of instruction taking place or the population of students being educated that impact the ability of faculty to generate credit hours?

Response:

1. Faculty members in the Department of Economics teach in the UCOR which caps enrollment to 19 students per section. In Albers the average course size is 32 students. This indicates that for

every 3 courses Economics faculty teach in the UCOR, we are missing out on more than course worth of students. In other words, we miss the opportunity to teach 13 students for each UCOR course we teach.

2. The Department of Economics faculty serves on a variety of campus committees and receives fellowships that give them release time from teaching courses. Examples for 2015-16 include Meena Rishi, Bridget Hiedemann, Quan Le and Gareth Green for a total of eight course releases. This does NOT include releases for professorships, endowed chairs, program directorship and the department chair, which added another seven releases in 2015-16.
3. Several Economics faculty members teach courses that serve other programs. For example, Dean Peterson teaches one course for either SU honors or MRC and Meena Rishi teaches INST 3250 twice per year, in which the number of economics students is capped at eight per class. The Department of Economics also staffs a section of EVST 3050 and ECON 3750 is cross-listed with the AIST program. Having Economics faculty teach courses outside of the department requires the use of adjunct professors in other courses and reduces the quality of the courses from the Department of Economics.
4. In the past, one faculty member from the Department of Economics would teach in the SU Honors program twice every two years. In the new SU Honors program the Department of Economics will be providing faculty for five sections per year. This is significant increase that CANNOT be replaced with adjunct faculty due to AACSB guidelines.
5. The Department of Economics staffs the International Development Internship Program which is effort intensive for a small number of students. Meena Rishi is the IDIP director and teaches in the program. The number of students has ranged from 6 – 14, and usually 1 or 2 are economics majors, so it is a high burden relative to the number of students. Most students are not Albers students.
6. Most courses offered by the Department of Economics have high student enrollment, averaging over 30 students per section. Most of the courses in the Department of Economics require homework, exams and quantitative research assignments. The high number of students and quantity and rigor of assignments creates high grading burdens.
7. Economics faculty regularly teach independent study and independent research courses. This is common because economics can be applied to many disciplines yet the department is limited to offering a given set of electives. Our students like the applied nature of economics so are often interested in doing applied research. These independent student activities place a heavy advising and guidance burden on faculty, yet is truly beneficial for the students.
8. Two courses in the Department of Economics include service learning components. ECON 3620 Environmental and Resource Economics has student groups complete an economic analysis and present finding in a written and oral format for a non-profit or pubic agency. The projects require faculty to organize with 4 to 6 different agencies. ECON 4790 Economic Growth gives students the option of engaging in service learning with a small business from a developing country. Recent examples include different fair trade coffee cooperatives.
9. The Department of Economics offers students a specialization in International Economic Development, which requires that students engage in a Supplemental Activity such as an internship with a government agency or NGO involved with international economic

development. The additional requirement places an additional burden on the chair and faculty to help students find appropriate activities, review student projects, and serve on committees to ensure students have completed requirements.

10. The Department of Economics engages in teaching several distinct types of courses that create additional demands for faculty. First, the department teaches thirty-five sections of five different core courses per year for the Albers School that all have high enrollment. These courses place a large course load burden on the Department of Economics. Second, the department offers nineteen electives, most on an every-other year basis, which places a high course prep load on the faculty. Finally, many of the courses combine high level quantitative analysis and qualitative interpretation that places a high burden on faculty. Students generally are not accustom to applying calculus, statistics and computer programming to policy issues, so faculty spend lengthy amounts of time preparing in-class examples, online instructional materials, detailed assignments, and significant time in office hours with students.
11. The Department of Economics is a member of the Omicron Delta Epsilon Economics Honors society and sponsors the membership of economics students. This requires recruitment, registration and the provision of academic activities. Student members are encouraged to attend professional events with faculty, such as Global Washington and the Seattle Economists Council, and to interact with the Department of Economics Advisory Board.
12. The Department of Economics has established and maintains an Advisory Board comprised of professional economists from local businesses and government agencies. The department hosts quarterly meetings with the advisory board to discuss issues related to new programs, curriculum, assignment design, and student internships and mentoring. Faculty engage with the Advisory Board members to promote student learning and gain better understanding of evolving job market skills that may be useful in addition to the traditional economics curriculum.
13. The Department of Economics operates an annual intake event for economics majors to promote professional development. The event includes a professional speaker discussing their career path, representatives from the placement center and law school, and all economics faculty.
14. The Department of Economics faculty have begun gaining Hybrid Teaching Certification so they can teach Hybrid Courses effectively. One hybrid course will be offered Fall 2016.
15. Economics faculty call accepted students that have expressed interest in majoring in economics to provide prospective students with additional information and give them a chance to ask questions about Albers and Seattle University that they may have. We have found that students and their parents greatly appreciate the interaction with faculty.

What unrealized opportunities do you see? Are there ways that the contributions of the department/program to the mission and financial health of the university could be improved?

Response: It is well known that the job market is booming for students with quantitative skills in big data and data analytics. The Department of Economics is well positioned to deliver students with these skills but does not have the faculty or resources to deliver at the highest level. The Department of Economics has had conversations with the Departments of Mathematics and Computer Science to

develop a Bachelor's of Science in Economics that is based on course work from all three departments. However, for this to become a reality it would be necessary to develop at least one additional course and improve computing resources.

What particular constraints or challenges does the department/program face?

Response: The Department of Economics would greatly benefit from an additional full-time tenure track faculty member. We have had 20 to 30 sections taught by adjunct and visiting faculty each of the last two years. It is difficult to maintain accreditation standards when having to rely so heavily on temporary faculty.

Is there anything else you would like to put on the record?

Response: No.