

## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

### ECONOMICS MAJOR ASSESSMENT METHODS

The department goals for the education of economics majors consist of significant understanding of economics in three categories: macroeconomics, microeconomics, and economic statistics. Additional goals are set for those majors who inform us that they wish to consider graduate school in economics or business. To assess the success of the department in preparing economics majors and to help the department improve pedagogy, the department has instituted procedures in two parts. Part I relies upon an assessment of course work in three key courses that all majors must take. Part II relies on a survey of students, using a questionnaire modeled after the one used for this purpose by the Economics Department at the University of Colorado. This part also relies on the cooperation of the Economics Association, a club of undergraduate students, formed in cooperation with faculty to improve the undergraduate degree programming in the department. The club and the department chair are responsible for acquiring results to the survey.

#### Part I: Assessment of Key Courses.

A. . An Economics Major Assessment Committee will be appointed by the chair to examine the final examinations taken by economics majors in two key courses: Economics 301 (Intermediate Microeconomics), and Economics 302 (Intermediate Macroeconomics). In addition, the committee will assess a random sample of final examinations taken in Economics 210 (Statistics for Economists).

B. The Assessment Committee will prepare a statement to appear on all final exams, telling students that after their course grades are recorded their final exams will be used for this assessment as part of an on-going effort to improve the Economics Department course programming. They will be assured that their names will be deleted from the exams prior to the assessment and that the assessment will never lead to any change in student records.

C. The Economics Major Assessment Committee will report their findings to the department faculty.

D. This assessment will take place each year at the end of semester II.

#### Part II: Student Questionnaire.

This part relies upon a survey questionnaire conducted by the sent to all students enrolled in 300-level courses. A copy of the questionnaire is attached.

February 18, 2004

Re: We Need Your Advice!

Dear Students,

As you know, the Economics Department has undergone many changes over the past few years. One of the biggest changes has been the addition of nine new assistant professors; I hope you have had the opportunity to take courses from some of them. All of these changes were intended to increase our department's abilities to provide a strong education to our students, to conduct exciting new research, and to serve the broader university community. We believe that we have already made great progress toward those goals.

Nevertheless, we are always interested in new ways to improve as a department. By sharing your experiences, opinions, and ideas with us, you can help us continue to develop. I therefore ask you to take a few minutes to think about your experiences in economics classes at UWM and to write a letter to us expressing your thoughts. I have listed below a number of questions on which you can provide valuable insights-but please know that we welcome any comments or suggestions you are willing to share.

Your identity will never be divulged to any faculty member. Only compiled summary data will be provided to the Economics Department.

1. What economics courses did you find the most interesting? Why?
2. What economics courses did you find the most useful? Why? (Sure, it could be the same courses as in #1.)
3. What economics courses did you find the least interesting/useful?
4. Are there any economics professors of whom you think especially highly? If so, please name them and tell us what it is about them that you admire.
5. Do you have any additional comments about your experience in the Economics Department? This might include curriculum, advising, accessibility of instructors, etc.
6. The Department hopes that each graduating major is well grounded in a broad range of economic concepts, and is able to use those concepts in their understanding of the macro and micro economy in which they live.

How do you evaluate your education within the economics major in this regard?

**7. The Economics department intends that each graduating major will be capable of discussing major economic questions of the day, such as inflation, unemployment, taxes and government spending, public utility regulation, labor markets, etc.**

**How do you evaluate your education within the economics major in this regard?**

**8. The Economics department seeks to ensure that each graduating major will be able to find and use economic data from various sources, such as the government documents available on the internet, or published material such as the Beige Book provided by the Federal Reserve System, or the vast array of internet sites such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics web site ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)).**

**How do you evaluate your education within the Economics major in this regard?**

**9. How can the Economics major program be improved?**

**10. What is your general assessment of your experience within the UWM Economics major program?**

**If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you, and we thank you in advance for your input.**

**Sincerely,**

**Economics Association at UWM**