Introduction:

The AAC received and reviewed the Economics Program report in the fall of 2010. The document was written and submitted by the department Chair, Professor John Stoll. After reviewing the report, AAC members invited Professors Stole and Kangayappan to answer questions and to elaborate on the current state and future position of their program.

The mission statement and program objectives of Economics include “...focus on the allocation and distribution of scarce resources. As a social science, economics is fundamentally about people; their needs, wants and behavior, and the institutions they construct. As a discipline focusing on scarcity, economics includes the study of organizations and institutions that influence resource allocation. The foci of economists include business, government, households, product and services markets, and the markets for resources (e.g., land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurial abilities).”

Specifically the economics program mission encompasses:

1. Enriching environmentally-oriented social science and interdisciplinary course offerings with economics, which strongly support and complement the mission of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay;
2. Contributing to the university’s general education program;
3. Serving the needs of social science students in general and programs in business and education in particular;
4. Serving regional communities by, for example, offering Extended Degree (now Adult Degree Program) courses and involving students in regional studies through class and faculty research projects;
5. Offering a major and minor in economics;
6. Preparing students for employment in the private and public sectors; and
7. Assisting students in the economics program for further studies at the graduate level in economics and other fields.
Program Accomplishments:

The Economics program has made progress in adding “a set of courses from the business program that is able to count within the Economics major.” Consequently, more business majors are adding the major in Economics as well. The general curriculum has been revised. Some courses have been inactivated and others renamed in an attempt to remain current with economic trends. The course “Economics of Globalization has been added to the curriculum and two experimental courses in the area of health care economics and health care issues have been offered with the intent that these would move toward being a permanent addition to the program.”

The Economics Program is working with the Adult Degree Program to ensure a consistent offering of introductory courses as well as upper level courses in the major. “Three courses are also offered at least once a year as completely internet delivery formats (ECONOMICS 203, ECONOMICS 307, and ECONOMICS 453). In the future, if the intermediate theory courses (ECONOMICS 302 and ECONOMICS 330) were offered in alternative delivery format, adult degree students would be able to earn a minor in economics.” Overall, Economics now offers about 50% of its courses online.

“The Economics faculty continues to support the campus Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team, a team that is in its 12th year of existence and that has attended regional and in some cases national competitions every year of its existence. Two endowed scholarships funds have been initiated and soon awards will start to be made from them.”

The Economics faculty have been recognized for their significant contributions to the university. “Professor Ismail Shariff was named to the Philip J. and Elizabeth B. Hendrickson Professorship for Business and Professor John Stoll was named to the Austin E. Cofrin Professorship in Management. These awards recognize the scholarship accomplishments of their holders and attest to the overall quality of faculty in the Economics program at UW-Green Bay.”

Program Strengths and Weaknesses:

Strengths

The Economics faculty has had some success in bringing contract research dollars to the university. Future prospects look good. Seed money from the administration would facilitate this process.

Economics hopes to secure more financial resources from the administration “to develop an accredited program in Business Administration.” The addition of more majors and minors would facilitate this program advance. The program is also planning to garner “external support for research that could utilize undergraduate students in hands-on economics work.
This latter item would also create more program interest and a stronger group of graduating students. Improved placement of students will have a (positive) feedback on program recruitment and quality.”

The department is one of the campus leaders in alternative course presentations. The latest prospect under consideration is to offer Economics 330 online. The course in this format would provide support for the online Business major if all goes well.

**Weaknesses**

Although the Economics program is a viable entity at this time, the future quality of the program will depend on a number corrections, additions, and enhancements.

Part of the problem stems from the fact that Economics answers to three budgetary units: Urban and Regional Studies, Social Change and Development, and Business. Requests to replace retiring faculty in the future must be made in the best interests of Economics. According to the Chair, the UWGB Economics program is “flat” in comparison with the same major offered on other UW campuses. Flat was used to describe the lack of growth in the major as well as the ability to address contemporary areas of Economics. New faculty must be able to continue the major by maintaining the strong standard courses plus adding more courses in new areas that are not taught by resident faculty. In the long-run, the Economics program would be best served through a separate and independent budget, a single administrative point of contact responsible for the entire program or, at the very least, close coordination among Urban and Regional Studies, Social Change and Development, and Business to ensure that the needs of the Economics program are not shortchanged in hiring and course scheduling.

A weakness in student advising surfaced during the interview. Education students who emphasize Economics seldom see an Economics advisor. In an attempt to rectify the situation, future Education majors taking Economics courses will be asked to identify themselves and their intentions to seek the Economics Teaching Certificate. In addition, the Chairs of Education and Economics will meet to discuss more effective ways to mesh their respective programs to coordinate education experiences for students and to guarantee that their “graduates are appropriately trained.”

The core curriculum has been criticized from within the department and consequently is under reconstruction. The Economics faculty is working diligently to restructure existing courses and prerequisites to meet the current needs of students. The plan includes a “gradual reorientation of courses as retirements take place...over the coming five years.” The unit hopes to increase their expertise in Game Theory and to “strengthen quantitative content of courses” through new faculty hires.
When asked about the number of credits needed for graduation and the availability of advanced courses, the Chair replied “Credits were increased from 21 to 24 in the 1990’s...” He also stated that the unit would readdress whether additional courses should be added to upper level requirements.

Another weakness that surfaced related to assessment. By their own admission “assessing the achievement of student learning outcomes is currently inadequate. At present, there is no formal assessment.” To remedy this problem, the faculty is evaluating the merits of an embedded assessment during four courses taken at different levels of the major. They also plan to implement a formal exit interview with the majors and a survey interview with graduating minors.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:**

The current Economics faculty is to be commended for sustaining a quality program in light of reduced faculty and resources. However, more can be done by faculty and administration to insure a vibrant, modern program for the future.

In order for the Economics program at UWGB to remain strong and meet the needs of students in the upcoming decade, the faculty must work with the administration to provide a solid core of courses plus new offerings that meet contemporary needs of majors and minors in the program. The mission of UW-Green Bay to contribute to the regional economy can only be met by the full commitment and participation of the university administration. Current economic doldrums can be countered, in part, by a robust Economics Program at the university level.

The AAC recommends a more formal and reliable method to assess student performance. This would validate the Economics program’s attempt to better the local and state economy.

The AAC also supports the program’s intention to increase their “involvement with the campus Focus program, and development of additional emphases that are complimentary with other academic programs in the social sciences, e.g., public administration, psychology, social change and development, urban and regional studies. An additional but unused opportunity is to better connect with regional high schools and career counselors at these facilities.”

Finally, the ACC concurs with the goals planned by the Economics Program to improve their position within the next seven years. They include:

1. Attraction of a greater number of majors while maintaining and improving student academic quality
2. Strengthening the quantitative content of courses and abilities of students
3. Examine and develop a clear set of course prerequisites that differentiates senior level (400 numbered) courses from junior level (300 numbered) courses.

4. Consider the development of a program CORE for all majors with a more structured subsequent course choice by creating two or more emphasis areas within the program, e.g., financial markets and investment, economic policy analysis, quantitative methods and game theory, etc.

5. Assessing learning outcomes in a more formal manner

6. Strengthening the relationship with other academic programs in several thematic areas
   a. Public policy analysis;
   b. Regional economics
   c. Environmental sustainability
   d. Health care
   e. Business, finance, investment, and banking

7. Strengthening its placement of graduates into regional businesses and national graduate schools;

8. Develop more coordination with UW-Green Bay’s Education program for assisting students who desire to receive certification for teaching economics at the secondary (high school) level. In the past 20 years this coordination has been essentially nonexistent.

Questions from the AAC and responses by the Economics program are attached as an appendix.

Cc: AAC members (Steven Dutch, Christine Style, Mimi Kubsch, Woo Jeon, Dennis Lorenz)
Prof. John Stoll, Chair Economics
SOFAS
Appendix: Economics Program Responses to AAC Questions

Advising
1. You say you need more coordination of advising between education students and economics advisers. How will you provide this? Existing Faculty?
   Propose that education students have economics program sign-off on paperwork if they plan to seek economics teaching certification.
2. How will you develop coordination between the economics program and the Education Program?
   Will invite education program chairperson or education faculty involved with requirements to certify economics teachers as participants in a meeting with the Economics Program faculty to discuss ways to more effectively guarantee that graduates are appropriately trained. It is important that the Economics Faculty be aware of teaching requirements and also which students are seeking to be certified for this purpose. It may even be feasible to modify Economics Program requirements in a way to better serve the interests of these students.

Program Growth
1. How will you attract a greater number of majors?
   Better promotion of potential for double major in business, further involvement with the campus Focus program, and development of additional emphases that are complementary with other academic programs in the social sciences, e.g., public administration, psychology, social change and development, urban and regional studies. An additional but unused opportunity is to better connect with regional high schools and career counselors at these facilities.
2. Have you formally requested any faculty increase for the Economics Program?
   Yes, proposals have been submitted to the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences several times by the Public and Environmental Affairs unit in the past 5 years. Every program review since 1992 and also in the CAPE 1 and CAPE 2 processes have also had requests from the Economics Program for additional faculty. The net result is that we have two less economists than were on the faculty in 1992.
3. Is the presently listed faculty position in Economics an new hire or a replacement for a retiring faculty member?
   A replacement position for Larry Smith who retired in past December 2009.

Program Quality/ Program Needs
1. You say the program has room for improvement in several core theory areas and in the development of quantitative understanding and application tools. How will you improve the program with existing faculty (not relying on a future hire)?
   Restructuring of existing courses and prerequisites. Gradual reorientation
of courses as retirements take place (in addition to the current replacement position) over the coming 5 years.

2. You identified that mathematical methods for economics, introductory econometrics, and game theory are weak areas. How will you strengthen these areas?

   Game theory and econometric expertise is something we hope to obtain with more currently trained replacement faculty. We are not a specialized enough campus to orient a position entirely to these areas but recent Phd’s typically have some coursework in these areas and would be able to teach first exposure courses in these areas. Mathematical and statistical skills can be better developed using the existing ECONOMICS 310 course and adding a second course for majors more specifically to focus upon econometrics (using ECONOMICS 310 and/or upper level mathematics courses) as a prerequisite.

3. You identified the need for intermediate theory courses to be prerequisite to problem-based courses. What are your plans to remedy this – How will it affect general education?

   Changing prerequisites for 400 level courses to include appropriate 300 level courses should have minimal, if any, impact upon the general education program. Some of the 300 level courses in the Economics Program are topic oriented on problems such as health care, labor, and the environment and require only intro micro and macro theory (ECONOMICS 202 and ECONOMICS 203) which are already general education course. These courses could be more heavily used by the general education program than currently done.

4. A prerequisite at the upper division level creates a serious problem for a bottleneck if the prerequisite courses cannot satisfy all prospective students. Do you have plans to deal with this issue?

   Main prerequisites for the upper division (400) level courses would be ECONOMICS 302 and ECONOMICS 303. These courses are both currently offered every semester and have room for additional enrollment. This should not create a bottleneck.

5. Do you have concrete plans to offer Economics 301 and Economics 330 online?

   ECONOMICS 301 is not currently an active course, it was formerly an Extended Degree course and is not utilized anymore. ECONOMICS 330 has not yet been offered online but the potential is there to consider this. The Adult Degree program is currently proposing this and we will work with them to get it accomplished as it would offer support for the online business major they offer.

6. Are faculty “on-board” willing to strengthen quantitative content of courses and abilities of students?

   Yes, the faculty are “generally” supportive of this endeavor and certainly of the view that it is necessary. Again, as a new economist is brought on board and retirements occur, this is expected to occur and will be part of...
the candidate evaluation process.

7. How close are you to developing a program CORE along with areas of emphasis?

A CORE program is already in place and appears to be a functional as well as somewhat unique one compared to many programs. Areas of emphasis have been discussed but not enacted. This will be an agenda item for greater delineation and implementation over the current year.

8. The Economics major seems light on the number of credits needed for graduation compared to other disciplinary programs, especially at the supporting course level. Have you considered increasing the credits required?

Credits were increased from 21 to 24 in the 1990’s at the same time as the CORE was established. It is time to readdress whether an additional one or two courses (3-6) credits should be added to the program’s upper level requirements. This will be a natural item of discussion as efforts to delineate emphasis areas are addressed over the remainder of the academic year.

Program Assessment

1. What is your plan for assessing learning outcomes in a more formal manner?

Beyond exit interviews and embedded assessment from the CORE courses, there are not plans. As these are implemented, their usefulness will lead to discussions of whether additional formal assessment is needed. The embedded assessment plan will be discussed during the current semester and hopefully put in place by the faculty during the Spring of 2011. Exit interviews will be conducted during the current semester with graduating majors.

2. How will you strengthen placement of graduates?

This is an area for further work and is largely done by personal contacts at the moment and reliance on the campus Placement Office. More is needed but administrative support is not available for a coordinated effort. The AAC has recognized an area that the program faculty needs to put on its agenda to address and develop an action plan.

3. Why has it been nine years since the previous AAC review?

Quite honestly, economists are trained to study incentives and payoffs. The economics program history on our campus has demonstrated little if any payoff from conducting program reviews, despite what was felt to be well reasoned arguments, recommendations, and even the use of external consultants for the economics program. Taking action to move on the review request was not given priority with everyone having plenty on their plate already. The incentives changed with new campus administration and a perception that the review would make a difference.

Outreach and Coordination with other programs on campus

1. How will you strengthen the relationship with other academic programs in several thematic areas?
In the process of developing emphasis areas, it is anticipated that courses from programs other than economics will be included. This will require consultation and discussion with Business Administration, Urban and Regional Studies, Social Change and Development, Nursing, Social Work, and Psychology. In addition, we have been trying to promote more courses to other programs that may have an interest. We have also had discussion with the Nursing Program chair, for example, regarding the teaching of an online health care issues/economics course in the future.

2. How will you secure more financial resources from upper administration to support the economics program?

By arguing our case better and demonstrating the importance of economics to the development of an accredited program in Business Administration. Also, by growing the number of majors and minors needing courses in Economics. Finally, by becoming a more integral part of the degree programs of other academic units on campus. Beyond this, there is also a belief that economists are capable of garnering external support for research that could utilize undergraduate students in hands-on economics work. This latter item would also create more program interest and a stronger group of graduating students. Improved placement of students will have a feedback on program recruitment and quality.

Please complete the table below. Add any other faculty who teach courses for the Economics major / minor. This helps the AAC have a better understanding of your current and actual FTE / faculty resources.

<table>
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<th>Faculty listed on UWGB Economics website</th>
<th>Faculty appointment status</th>
<th># of courses in load that are specifically for the Economics program per year</th>
<th>Has Advising responsibilities for Economics students</th>
<th>Is there a reassignment for advising?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kumar Kangayappan</td>
<td>Full time, tenured</td>
<td>6 (+ one adult degree)</td>
<td>Yes, no</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ismail Shariff</td>
<td>Full time, tenured</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Yes, no</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Stoll (chair)</td>
<td>Full time, tenured</td>
<td>6 (+ chair reassignment)</td>
<td>Yes, no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Nesslein</td>
<td>Full time, tenured</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes, no</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Hire (?)</td>
<td>Full time, tenure track</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
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