



## Program Review Quality Assurance Plan

Quality Assurance Plan for: Department of Economics

Date submitted to SSCPR: November 24, 2016

Date Self-Study Report approved by SSCPR: December 7, 2016

Date of External Review: March 24, 2017

### SUMMARY

*Summarize what the program has determined - through evidence - about program quality (e.g. strengths, challenges, opportunities for improvement, potential threats, etc.)*

*Background: At present, the Economics Department largely provides service courses – in particular, introductory microeconomic and macroeconomic principles courses – for the School of Business [SOB] and other programs. The Department also oversees the SOB Business Administration Diploma [BAD], and presently offers an Associate of Arts Degree in Economics [AAE] as well as an Arts Minor in Economics [AME].*

#### *Strengths:*

- *Student demand for introductory principles courses is vast<sup>1</sup>, creating significant employment opportunity within the Department.*
- *Student demand for the BAD is significant<sup>2</sup> and stable. There is evidence for strong graduate performance upon transfer to Simon Fraser University, a common destination of BAD students.<sup>3</sup>*
- *Within the BC postsecondary sector, the AAE is unique to KPU. Student demand, while remaining modest,<sup>4</sup> has grown significantly in recent years. In addition, this credential is fiscally inexpensive in that it relies on courses offered to students in multiple programs.*

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<sup>1</sup> 2612 students enrolled in ECON 1150 and ECON 1250 in 2015/2016, equal to 279 FTE. Source: KPU Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning [IAP], as reported in the Self Study Appendix “Economics Enrollment.”

<sup>2</sup> 510 students enrolled in the BAD in 2014/2015. Source: KPU IAP, as reported in the Self Study Appendix “Administrative Data.”

<sup>3</sup> BCCAT report “BC Transfer Students: Profile and Performance Report 2008/9-2012/13,” pp. 70, 73. For data and discussion, see the Economics Program Self Study Report, pp. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> 104 students enrolled during 2014/2105. Source: KPU IAP, as reported in the Self Study Appendix “Administrative Data.”

- *Student survey data collected during the Self Study indicates interest in expanded upper level economics course offerings, and economic credentials.<sup>5</sup>*

#### *Weaknesses:*

- *Consistent with other postsecondary institutions, student performance in introductory economics principles courses is low relative to other programs, including other SOB programs.<sup>6</sup> This reduces potential demand for economics course offerings beyond introductory principles.*
- *Student employment rates within the BAD and AAE are below provincial Ministry of Advanced Education [AVED] targets.<sup>7</sup> Student satisfaction with certain forms of skill development within the BAD and AAE – in particular, effective speaking and writing – are below AVED targets.*
- *Aside from the BAD, the Economics Department's credential offerings are unworkable for the department's biggest source of potential clients – business students. The Arts course requirements of the AAE and AME are unattainable for SOB majors – SOB degree requirements leave insufficient credit room for the AAE or AME.*
- *The market potential for continued expansion of the AME appears limited within the current Arts Double Minor framework.*

#### *Challenges/threats:*

- *The primary BAD market – transfer to 4-year business programs at major universities like SFU - appears to be shrinking, in part because of the creation of learning partnerships between the major universities and transfer schools that compete with KPU.<sup>8</sup>*
- *Significant funding challenges for undergraduate education limit SOB ability to support expanded upper level economics course offerings or the creation of new credentials requiring additional courses.*

#### *Opportunities for improvement:*

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<sup>5</sup> For a presentation and discussion of the data, see the Self Study Report, p.26.

<sup>6</sup> See the discussion of IAP Academic Performance Profile data on p.21 of the Self Study Report.

<sup>7</sup> See the results reported by IAP, as discussed on pp.23-25 in the Self Study Report.

<sup>8</sup> See the discussion on pp.8-10 in the Self Study Report.

- *A SOB re-accreditation emphasis on the introduction of learning outcome assessment [LOA] systems holds promise for education quality improvements in Economics courses and programs.*
- *With an emphasis on positive performance data at receiving institutions, enhanced marketing efforts could counteract challenges faced by the BAD.*
- *A shift in focus from the present AME to a Minor in Economics affiliated with SOB major programs [a “Minor in Economics,” or ME] could tap a substantial market within the Faculty. The need to create additional, credential-specific offerings for a ME can be minimized by reliance on adjustments made within existing course offerings.*

QUALITY ASSURANCE GOALS

List the program’s Quality Assurance Goals (broad statements about what the program intends to accomplish to ensure program quality). Identify the Recommendation(s) – drawn from the Self-Study Report and External Review Report - each Goal addresses. Provide a brief Rationale for each Goal (see the Quality Assurance Plan Guidelines for instructions). Add or remove rows as necessary.

GOAL 1: Establish a consistent and impactful connection with program industry stakeholders.

RATIONALE FOR THIS GOAL: The Economics Department currently lacks a consistent connection with program stakeholders [e.g. employers of SOB or Economics credential graduates]. If properly structured, such connection would assure program quality by providing necessary industry input. A feasible solution is to form a compact program advisory committee [PAC], established through existing Department connections [e.g. a 4 member PAC, including a Chief Economist from a BC industry sector and a representative from the BC financial services firm].

Connection with industry stakeholders aligns the Economics Department with the Faculty and University mission of blending theory with practice and the vision to establish authentic, collaborative external relationships.

Recommendation(s) this Goal Addresses	Report (page number)
Both the Self-Study Report [SSR] and External Review Report [ERR] strongly recommend establishment of industry connections, primarily though the establishment of a PAC.	SSR – 17, 31, 32, 34 ERR – 3, 4, 6

GOAL 2: Improve student performance in existing Economics course offerings.

RATIONALE FOR THIS GOAL: Student success in Economics course offerings is low relative to other programs – in particular, Business programs. This problem is recognized in both the SSR and ERR. Improved student performance will increase student satisfaction and enhance demand for Economics program offerings. A feasible solution exists – the creation and implementation of on-going learning outcome assessment [LOA] systems - including provisions for student feedback - for Economics programs. Such systems, a requirement for SOB re-accreditation, may especially benefit economics programs.

Improved student performance addresses the SOB Vision by enhancing the likelihood of developing exceptional students. Regarding SOB Mission, student success perpetuates the virtuous circle of student engagement and inspiration. At the Institution level, achievement of this goal validates the University’s mission to provide opportunity for success, and lays groundwork for the vision of student engagement.

Recommendation(s) this Goal Addresses	Report (page number)
The SSR highlights the lack of economics student success relative to other programs, and the need to seek answers.	SSR – 21, 22
The ERR notes that lack of student success in Economics is a problem common to other postsecondary institutions [e.g. SFU]. While the ERR does not offer a solution, implementation of LOA systems is a feasible option.	ERR – 5

**GOAL 3: Create greater student and stakeholder awareness of the strengths of the existing BAD and AAE, as well as awareness of opportunities associated with future program offerings.**

RATIONALE FOR THIS GOAL: The strengths of current Economics programs are not recognized by industry or potential students. A focused marketing campaign can enhance awareness and assist enrollment, and by establishing a quality claim in the market, strengthen faculty commitment to and accountability for program quality. The department anticipates a resource-modest marketing effort that leverages positive stakeholder feedback gained through the PAC.

Student and stakeholder awareness of opportunities for success through KPU programs is an essential first step toward the fulfillment of SOB and University mission and vision. Strategic marketing through stakeholder networks achieves the additional objectives of external relationship and collaboration.

Recommendation(s) this Goal Addresses	Report (page number)
The SSR notes the lack of visibility associated with existing Economics programs, and the need for a strategic marketing effort.	SSR – 31, 33
The ERR recognizes the overall importance of marketing effort, and notes that industry awareness is essential for the success of new Department initiatives such as a new ME.	ERR – 5, 3

**GOAL 4: Provide Business students the competencies and opportunities that arise from the alignment of economics with business practice.**

RATIONALE FOR THIS GOAL: Students and alumni are requesting enhanced opportunities for Economics offerings and credentials. At the same time, they want offerings which are closely tied to business practice, delivering skills which are job-relevant. Delivering on this request will ensure the relevancy of Economics within the SOB. A feasible solution exists in the form of a new ME: credit-

room exists for a ME within the existing SOB Major programs [i.e. Accounting, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Human Resource Management, and Marketing], and desired outcomes can be achieved largely within existing courses provided by Economics and affiliated departments [i.e. Business and Quantitative Methods [BUQU]].

Achievement of this goal will establish the Economics Department as a faculty-group that delivers industry-desired skills, and fulfills the SOB mission to produce organization-shaping graduates. For the Institution, goal achievement would further substantiate the University’s mission to provide programs that blend theory and practice and foster critical thinking. Consistent with the University Vision, Economics faculty will be inspired as they create a unique form of education value.

Recommendation(s) this Goal Addresses	Report (page number)
The SSR strongly recommends the Department pursue the creation of a ME with an analytic focus.	SSR – 8, 10, 12, 33-34
The ERR strongly encourages consideration of a ME with an applied analytic capacity.	ERR – 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

**RECOMMENDATIONS THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN DOES NOT ADDRESS**

List the Recommendations from the Self-Study and External Review this Plan does not address. Provide a brief explanation why these Recommendations cannot be addressed. Add or remove rows as necessary.

Recommendations	Report (page number)	Explanation
N/A – all major recommendations addressed		

**QUALITY ASSURANCE FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN**

*Describe the Quality Assurance Strategies (specific plans of action) the program must achieve to attain its Goal over the next five year. Detail the steps the program will take to achieve each Strategy. Add or remove Strategies and tables as necessary.*

**MONTH/YEAR WHEN THE FIVER-YEAR ACTION PLAN BEGINS: September, 2017**

**STRATEGY 1: Establish a PAC**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: GOAL 1: Establish a consistent and impactful connection with program industry stakeholders. GOAL 3: Create greater student and stakeholder awareness of the strengths of the existing BAD and AAE, as well as awareness of opportunities associated with future program offerings. GOAL 4: Provide Business students the competencies and opportunities that arise from the alignment of economics with business practice.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: See discussion of related goals.

Step(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Establish PAC proposal, outlining objectives and roles	Don Reddick	Sept. 2017	Oct. 2017	
Connect with potential PAC members	Don Reddick	Oct. 2017	Nov. 2017	
Confirm PAC membership	Don Reddick	Nov. 2017	Dec. 2017	
First PAC meeting	Don Reddick	May 2018	June 2018	First meeting will provide PAC feedback on a preliminary ME proposal, and BAD PLO assessment and LOA results/refinements for Fall, 2017 and Spring, 2018. The relatively late date for a first meeting accommodates the need for ME preliminary-proposal development, and for BAD PLO assessment and LOA implementation [see below].



**STRATEGY 2: Create/employ/refine on-going LOA systems for the BAD and first-year economics principles courses.**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: GOAL 2: Improve student performance in existing Economics course offerings.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: See related goal discussion.

Action(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Employ and oversee BAD PLO Assessment during Fall 2017 semester	Steven Cheah	Sept. 2017	Dec. 2017	A BAD PLO assessment system has already been developed by the Economics Department and will be employed for the first time in Fall 2017
Design LOA systems for first year principles courses	Sinisa Vujovic	Sept. 2017	Oct. 2017	
Employ and oversee principles LOA during Fall 2017 semester	Sinisa Vujovic	Oct. 2017	Dec. 2017	
Department review of Fall 2017 BAD PLO Assessment results and student feedback; recommendations for education quality improvements/process refinements to BAD PLO Assessment	Don Reddick	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018	
Department review of Fall 2017 principles LOA results and student feedback; recommendations for education quality improvements/process refinements to principles LOA	Don Reddick	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018	
Refine and oversee BAD PLO Assessment during Spring 2018 semester	Steven Cheah	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	
Refine and oversee principles LOA during Spring 2018 semester	Sinisa Vujovic	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	
Department review of Spring 2018 BAD PLO Assessment results and student feedback; recommendations for education quality improvements/process refinements to BAD PLO Assessment	Don Reddick	May 2018	June 2018	
Department review of Spring 2018 principles LOA results and student feedback; recommendations for education quality improvements/process refinements to principles LOA	Don Reddick	May 2018	June 2018	
Refine and oversee BAD PLO Assessment during Summer 2018 semester	Steven Cheah	May 2018	Aug. 2018	
Refine and oversee principles LOA during Summer 2018 semester	Sinisa Vujovic	May 2018	Aug. 2018	

Annually oversee BAD PLO Assessment	Steven Cheah	Sept. 2019	Sept. 2022	
Annually oversee LOA Assessment	Sinisa Vujovic	Sept. 2019	Sept. 2022	
Annually oversee ME PLO Assessment	Don Reddick	Sept. 2019	Sept. 2022	
Oversee annual Department reviews of BAD PLO and principles LOA results as well as student feedback; recommendations for education quality improvements/process refinements	Don Reddick	Sept. 2019	Sept. 2022	

***STRATEGY 3: PAC consultation regarding quality implications/refinements associated with BAD PLO assessments and principles LOA***

GOAL(S) THIS OBJECTIVE SUPPORTS: GOAL 1: Maintain a consistent and impactful connection with program industry stakeholders; GOAL 2: Improve student performance in existing Economics course offerings.

RATIONALE FOR THIS OBJECTIVE: See related goal discussion.

Action(s) Required to Achieve this Goal/Objective	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Consult with PAC; implement recommendations	Don Reddick	May 2018	May 2022	Annual consultation

**STRATEGY 4: Create a ME proposal.**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: Goal 4: Provide Business students the competencies and opportunities that arise from the alignment of Economics with business practice.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: This is the first step toward achieving Goal 4.

Action(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
ME consultation with BUQU and other SOB programs; SOB student survey to gauge interest in a ME	Don Reddick	Sept. 2017	Dec. 2017	
Drafting of a preliminary ME proposal [including ME PLOs and assessment rubrics]	Don Reddick	Jan. 2018	Apr. 2018	
Preliminary ME proposal consultation with PAC	Don Reddick	May 2018	June 2018	
Creation of a formal ME proposal	Don Reddick	June 2018	Sept. 2018	

**STRATEGY 5: Obtain internal [KPU] and external [Provincial] approval for the ME proposal; develop and finalize ME curriculum.**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: GOAL 4: Provide Business students the competencies and opportunities that arise from the alignment of Economics with business practice.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: This is the second step in achieving Goal 4.

Action(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Oversee internal [KPU] approval process	Joan McEachern	Sept. 2018	Dec. 2018	
Oversee external [Provincial] approval process	Joan McEachern	Jan. 2019	June 2019	
Develop preliminary ME curriculum	Don Reddick	Sept. 2018	Dec. 2018	
Finalize ME curriculum	Don Reddick	Jan. 2019	June 2019	
Consult with SOB Dean's Office regarding Sept. 2019 launch of ME	Don Reddick	Jan. 2019	June 2019	

**STRATEGY 6: Establish a marketing mechanism for Economics program offerings**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: GOAL 3: Create greater student and stakeholder awareness of the strengths of the existing BAD and AAE, as well as awareness of opportunities associated with a ME.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: See related goal discussion.

Action(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Create marketing strategy in consultation with PAC	Sinisa Vujovic	Sept. 2018	Nov. 2018	
Obtain SOB/KPU support for strategy	Sinisa Vujovic	Dec. 2018	Mar. 2019	
Implement strategy for the BAD, AAE, and the ME	Sinisa Vujovic	Mar. 2019	May 2019	

**STRATEGY 7: Launch ME**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: GOAL 4: Provide Business students the competencies and opportunities that arise from the alignment of Economics with business practice.

RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: This is the third step for achieving Goal 4.

Action(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Launch ME	Don Reddick	Sept. 2019	Sept. 2019	

**STRATEGY 8: Employ/refine on-going a LOA system for the ME.**

GOAL(S) THIS STRATEGY SUPPORTS: GOAL 2: Improve student performance in existing Economics course offerings.


RATIONALE FOR THIS STRATEGY: See related goal discussion.

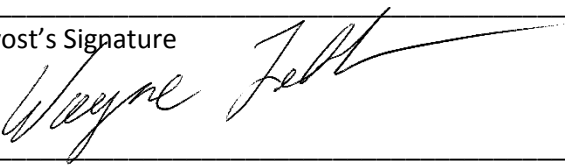
Action(s) Required to Achieve this Strategy	To be Led by	To Begin on (M/YY)	To be Completed By (M/YY)	Notes
Employ and oversee ME PLO Assessment in Spring 2022	Don Reddick	Jan. 2022	Apr. 2022	PLO assessment occurs at the point of program completion. ME graduates will not come on stream until 2022.
Department review of Spring 2022 ME PLO Assessment results; recommendations for education quality improvements/process refinements to the ME PLO Assessment	Don Reddick	May. 2022	June, 2022	

PLAN APPROVED BY:

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Provost's Name

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November 24, 2017  
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Date

November 15, 2017  
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Date