**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

**A. ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS AND STUDENT SUCCESS**

The Department of Economics at Foothill College is committed to providing students a challenging and enriching educational experience. We undertake this task while being cognizant of, and sensitive to, different learning styles and cultural backgrounds.

As we move into the 21st Century, it is our aim to contribute to the continued growth and success of Silicon Valley and the surrounding communities. By providing quality educational opportunities for all individuals, Foothill College and the Department of Economics help to enhance the viability and competitiveness of Silicon Valley in the international marketplace now, as well as for the years to come. The Department of Economics takes pride in preparing students to become successful members of the highly skilled workforce that Silicon Valley demands.

Within the last four years, the Department of Economics has undergone a few changes. The advent of a retirement and a resignation within the ranks of the full-time faculty has caused a good deal of instability within the department. This has had a negative impact on the ability of the department to regularly offer the core courses required for an Associates in Arts Degree in Economics. Yet, despite the disruptions, the Department has consistently offered all of the core courses required for an Associates in Arts Degree in Economics over the last two years, either online or in class. The Department of Economics has continued to provide students with a dynamic and enriching educational experience in the face of challenging circumstances.

Recently, after one unsuccessful search, the Department of Economics has added one full-time faculty member, bringing the total number of full time faculty in the department to two. This will undoubtedly bring a greater degree of stability, synergy, and vitality to the department as a whole. The department has also successfully hired and retained several additional part time faculty to help meet the current staffing needs. Together, the staff remains poised to successfully satisfy current as well as future demand for economics courses, and will endeavor to exceed the already high standards the department has set for itself with respect to productivity, student success and student retention.

**STRENGTHS**

Certainly one of the strengths the program possesses is the current team of full-time and part-time instructors within the department. Collectively, they are extremely passionate about the subject of economics, and that passion greatly assists in producing an exciting learning experience for the students. In addition, the department is also determined in their commitment to student success. Although it is difficult to measure or quantify, passion is perhaps the greatest strength the program possesses.

Another strength of the program is its propensity to be creative and the ability the members of the department have to tap into this creativity when it comes to all aspects of the courses they teach. Whether it is developing a webpage on which to post assignments and articles, developing fun and exciting classroom assignments, using a CD-ROM delivering visual and audio input to students, or utilizing an interactive online tool to enhance student’s comprehension and overall success, the faculty of the department are always seeking new ways to reach each and every one of their students.

A final strength of the program is the diverse experience of the faculty. Both full-time faculty worked extensively in the private sector prior to arriving at Foothill. These experiences range from sales and marketing management to finance and international development aid. This enables the instructors to easily mesh the textbook theory with real-world applications.

**WEAKNESSES**

A potential weakness for the department is the relative teaching inexperience of the full-time faculty. Although this youthfulness is a strength, in terms of energy and ambition, there is also a trade-off in terms of experience in handling difficult classroom situations. Fortunately, both full-time instructors have the "natural" qualities of effective teachers, so this weakness is less pronounced than it otherwise would be.
EXTERNAL FACTORS
With regard to the external factors affecting the Department of Economics and the program, many changes are taking place within the economy, not only at the global and national level, but also at the local level here in the Bay Area and Silicon Valley in particular. In the late 1990’s Silicon Valley experienced a phenomenal level of growth and prosperity, largely due to the development and success of the computer-related and Biotech industries. With this came an increase in demand for skilled labor. High technology firms were desperate for qualified, educated workers to assist in meeting the market’s demands for their goods and services.

Today, the economic climate in Silicon Valley, as well as the United States and the global economy in general, has indeed changed. After the longest economic expansion in the nation’s history, the U.S. economy suffered its first recession in nearly 10 years in 2001. Locally, the unemployment rate has recently reached nearly 8% from a low of 1.3% during the boom years of the late 1990’s. This has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in the Greater Bay Area, primarily in the high-tech sector. As a result, people have been reassessing their job skills and their overall marketability to today’s tough labor market. The current state budgeting crisis is only exacerbating these trends. To compete effectively, people have been returning to community colleges to retool and improve their marketability at a reasonable cost.

Foothill College and the Department of Economics are well positioned to offer a high-quality, low-cost educational opportunity. With an A.A Degree in Economics, students may either transfer to a four-year institution immediately, or enter the workforce. So both in boom and bust the demand for an economics education remains strong. In boom times we are there to prepare new entrants for growing demand. In bust times we are there to assist those in transition and provide them with a competitive edge. True, the economy today is not what it was in the late 1990’s. But sooner or later, the economy will strengthen and demand for high tech equipment will increase, and along with that demand for those high tech products and services will be the demand for skilled and educated people.

Interest in Economics as a field of study seems to be growing in popularity over the last decade or so. Indeed, people became keenly interested in what the stock market had been doing during the late 1990’s, and saw economics as a potential key to unlock the potential wealth that lay before them in the various asset markets. Some saw (and still do see) the study of economics as essential background for understanding markets, not to mention how to possibly forecast future market directions to assist in their own accumulation of wealth through their own investment strategies. Whatever the case, with the study of economics experiencing a sort of “renaissance”, we expect the demand for economics courses to continue to be strong and increase in the future here at Foothill College. This is particularly true considering the evolution of online courses and the educational opportunity they create for a wider population of potential students. The Department of Economics is well positioned to satisfy this demand through both our growing online and traditional inclass offerings.

In conclusion, the department is currently staffed by two full-time, non-tenured faculty members, and five part-time faculty members. With this in mind, the department is well positioned to meet the current and future demands for economics courses, even with the changing demographic, economic, and workforce trends taking place in Silicon Valley now, as well as in the near future.

B. STUDENT SUCCESS EVALUATION
As stated below in Section D, the Department of Economics is committed to ensuring the highest level of student success while also maintaining the highest level of academic standards and level of rigor in the courses we offer. The faculty in the department are continually searching for new methods and tools to utilize in order to achieve the highest level of student success possible. This desire to help each and every student taking an economics class be more successful is evident in the innovative and creative methods and tools used.

For example, the economics faculty utilize a range of activities to help boost student success, such as inclass exercises, experiments, videos, group discussions, homework problem sets, and guest speakers. The faculty also utilize the latest in technology to help enhance overall student success, such as creating and maintaining a webpage to post current articles, or using an online interactive tool for Economics in order to conduct tutorials, assign problem sets for homework, conduct online market experiments, and read news articles. By undertaking these activities and utilizing these tools, the economics faculty is making every effort to ensure the absolute highest level of student success possible.
In sum, though the level of student success in Economics is below the college average, the faculty feel that this is not a true and accurate reflection of the efforts being made by the Department to ensure student success. The material typically covered in Economics is quite difficult due to its quantitative nature. It combines disciplines ranging from Mathematics and Statistics to History, Psychology, and Sociology. Due to these inherent complexities it is not an easy subject to master. However, the faculty in the Department of Economics remain steadfast in their commitment to ensuring the absolute highest level of student success without compromising the integrity of the material and the level of academic rigor in every economics course that is taught.

C. STUDENT EQUITY/DIVERSITY ANALYSIS
With respect to student equity, the Department of Economics is sensitive to the varied learning styles students may possess given their ethnicity, gender and age. By maximizing the benefits that accrue from diversity, the faculty within the Department of Economics can encourage students to share with each other their different views, perspectives, and life experiences due to their age, gender and ethnicity. This will not only help to elevate the overall level of deep learning taking place in the class, but offer students the opportunity to adjust their own views and perspectives towards these and other issues, and indeed help them to be more responsible, sensitive, and understanding citizens.

D. ACTION PLANS AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES
Program Goals Related to EMP and PFE
1) Improve Student Retention and Success Rates.

One goal of the Department of Economics is that of improving student success rates. Currently, the success rate for students in economics is 72%, which is below the average success rate of around 80% for Foothill College. However, given the difficult nature of the subject matter (similar to mathematics or statistics), the success rate in economics may consistently be below the school’s success rate average, despite efforts to the contrary.

The entire Department remains committed to helping all students. In addition to scheduled office hours, the economics faculty routinely meet students by appointment (when applicable) and encourages all students to make use of their services.

Other Program Improvement Plans
1) An Economics Club has been established for students interested in learning more about economics and the career opportunities for students who major in economics. The club meets weekly and has hosted several guest speakers as well as undertaken a variety of group activities. It is a goal of the faculty to support the club and assist it to grow in size and stature.

2) The Department of Economics faculty believe that the current courses being offered within the program may be in need of updating. In particular, it may be beneficial for students majoring in economics at Foothill to take Math 10 and Math 1A to better prepare them for the mathematical rigors they will encounter in a four-year institution or in the private sector. Economics as a discipline has become more mathematically based, requiring students to be increasingly fluent in mathematical theory and concepts. As such, the Department feels that these two Math courses may be better placed as support courses rather than elective courses for the economics major. If this is done, the Department feels that the two History courses currently deemed "support" courses should be lowered to "elective" status in order to better reflect the prerequisites of virtually any four-year school.

E. ENROLLMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY GOALS:
The Department of Economics traditionally is one of the most productive departments in the entire BSS Division. The productivity figure for 2001-02 was 761, well above the target of 530 that the college has established. Furthermore, the department typically enjoys very heavy enrollment quarter after quarter, typically exceeding the initial maximum load of 50 students in every course. Over the last three years enrollment has risen from 1,383 to 1,923. The faculty are making every effort to meet the strong demand for their courses.

The goal of the department is to continue these trends by creating courses that are interesting, fun, dynamic, and intellectually stimulating. As such, we believe the courses being offered in the Department of Economics will continue to be highly sought after by students and we are prepared to continue to meet this demand.
F. \textbf{SUMMARY OF RESOURCES REQUESTED:}

1. \textbf{FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT FACULTY OR STAFF NEEDS:} There are no staffing needs at this time, either full-time or part-time.

2. \textbf{FACILITIES NEEDS:} The Department would be potentially interested in upgrading the rooms commonly used for economics courses to be multi-media ready, including projectors, computers, and appropriate screens.

3. \textbf{MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES BUDGET AUGMENTATION:} None, except for the typical supplies, such as chalk, erasures, paper, ink cartridges for office printers, etc.

\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{Evaluation of academic year 2002-2003.} \\
List names of participants assisting in this program review. \\
Primary program contact person(s): Brian Evans and Jay Patyk \\
Phone or email address: evansbrian@fhda.edu or patykjay@fhda.edu \\
Full-time faculty: Brian Evans; Jay Patyk \\
Part-time faculty: Lisa Bates; Denise Geschke; Mark Powell; Arthur Quach; Angelo Rivero-Santos \\
Administrators: Dean Elizabeth Zoltan \\
Classified staff: N/A \\
Students: N/A
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\textbf{Date of evaluation: 2/20/03}
**PROGRAM NAME:** Economics  
Degree/certificate options available: A.A. (30 units required)

**PROGRAM MISSION AND OUTCOMES:** To provide students with economic tools (detailed below) that can improve the quality of decision-making. To prepare graduates either for immediate employment or for transfer into an economics program at a 4-year institution.

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<th>DIRECT OUTCOMES: Program-Specific Outcomes and Attributes Desired of Program Graduates</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM CONTENT PROFICIENCIES/COMPETENCIES</strong></td>
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| Apply the basic economic concepts of opportunity cost and marginal analysis | Make more informed decisions on a variety of problems that we all face, such as: the cost of credit card debt, the return to investment in education, career choices… | ECON 1A  
ECON 1B | Direct measures: Tests designed to force students to exhibit this skill. Students must earn a “C” or better. |
| Apply simple supply and demand analysis to markets. Understand instances of market failure. | Understand the impact of market forces on prices | ECON 1A  
ECON 1B | Direct measures: Tests designed to force students to exhibit this skill. Students must earn a “C” or better. |
| Firm grasp of meaning and importance of a variety of microeconomic terms such as: externality, public good, monopoly, oligopoly, monopolistic competition, perfect competition, marginal product of labor, anti-trust law. Understand the role of the government as it pertains to microeconomic decisions. | Understand and critique standard (newspaper) articles discussing economic events | ECON 1B | Direct measures: Tests designed to force students to exhibit this skill. Students must earn a “C” or better.  
**Indirect measures:** Students read / discuss / critique articles focusing on current economic events. |
| Firm grasp of meaning and importance of a variety of macroeconomic terms such as: fiscal policy, monetary policy, inflation, GDP, economic growth, the natural rate of unemployment. Understand the role of the government as it pertains to macroeconomic decisions. | Understand and critique standard (newspaper) articles discussing economic events. | ECON 1A | Direct measures: Tests designed to force students to exhibit this skill. Students must earn a “C” or better.  
**Indirect measures:** Students read / discuss / critique articles focusing on current economic events. |
| Firm grasp of meaning and importance of a variety of international economic concepts such as: the balance of payments, current account, capital account, and comparative advantage | Understand and critique standard (newspaper) articles discussing global economic events | ECON 25  
(to a lesser extent ECON 1A and ECON 1B) | Direct measures: Tests designed to force students to exhibit this skill. Students must earn a “C” or better.  
**Indirect measures:** Students read / discuss / critique articles focusing on current economic events. |
| Understand the impact of political power on economic conditions, and the implications that economic conditions have on the decisions that follow | Be familiar with and understand the varying opinions concerning current issues of political economy. | ECON 9  
(to a lesser extent ECON 1A and ECON 1B) | Direct measures: Tests designed to force students to exhibit this skill. Students must earn a “C” or better. |
### PROGRAM CONTENT

#### PROFICIENCIES/COMPETENCIES

**BEHAVIORS:** What should a student be able to do upon graduation?

**REQUIRED PROGRAM COURSES** related to this outcome: Where do students acquire experience?

**OUTCOME MEASURES — Evidence or Sample Demonstrating Deep Learning:** How do we know what a student has achieved?

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#### CORE COMPETENCIES

**Outcomes and Attributes Distinct to This Program**

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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Read, interpret and discuss articles focusing on economic issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computation</td>
<td>Work with graphs: Shift curves and find equilibriums. Perform basic algebra to solve equations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative, Critical &amp; Analytical Thinking</td>
<td>Interpret graphs that illustrate economic concepts. Be able to answer word problems that incorporate economic analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community/ Global Consciousness &amp; Responsibility</td>
<td>Become more informed about current economic issues and events.</td>
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**Indirect measures:** Students read about, discuss, and critique current economic events.

**Core Competencies: ECON 1A, ECON 1B, ECON 9, ECON 25**

- Small group discussions are used to give students practice and confidence in expressing their opinions.
- Tests require that students can solve computational problems as well as understand and interpret a variety of graphs.
- Tests and worksheets are partially designed to confront students with “new” problems that require them to apply the concepts discussed in class.
- Group and class discussion are used to foster tolerance and understanding of all cultures.