UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO | College of Arts and Sciences

M.S. in International and Development Economics

ASSESSMENT REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 – 2019
REPORT DUE DATE: 11/1/2019

I. LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).**

   Prof. Alessandra Cassar, acassar@usfca.edu

2. **Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2018? Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program.**

   There were no changes to our mission statement since the last assessment cycle. It reads as follows: The mission of our Masters of Science program is to equip our graduate students within the context of a Jesuit educational framework with the research and analytical tools that allow them to effectively investigate a wide array of economic phenomena related to globalization and development. Our program aims to enable them to serve effectively as junior researchers, policy analysts, and research-oriented development practitioners in a global environment.

3. **Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2018? Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.**

No.

1. Understand the application of modern micro and macroeconomic theory to the key problems of economic development, trade and finance in the context of an increasingly globalized economy, where this includes an analysis of market failures, poverty traps, the structure of incentives, the use of game theory to model economic behavior, open economy models of trade, models of natural resource use, migration, foreign direct investment, financial markets, and exchange rate determination.

2. Design a master's thesis research project based on summer fieldwork, including formation of an original research question, planning of an effective methodology, development of field protocols / survey instruments, and data collection in a developing or transition country. Students should develop a command of the relevant research tools needed to address a given poverty or globalization problem and test specific hypotheses.

3. Develop the capability of conducting an original quantitative empirical analysis of an international or development economics problem. Specifically, students should be able to understand the necessary empirical methods needed to identify causal relationships, especially related to international and development issues; determine the appropriate estimation method for an empirical model; utilize statistical software to conduct such estimation; and meaningfully interpret the results.

4. Effectively communicate technical research both in writing and orally, including compilation of a professional literature review, clear presentation of theoretical and empirical models, econometric analysis, and the relevance of the study's principal findings and implications for international and/or economic development theory and policy.

4. **Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2017-2018?**

We assessed all four of the PLOs through our thesis defenses, which give us information on each of them.

IDEC Program Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Mapping Worksheet

Key: C = Comprehensive Coverage, M = Moderate Coverage, I = Introduced with minimal coverage

Program Goals/Outcomes	Course Numbers											
	REQUIRED COURSES (7)							ELECTIVE COURSES				
	601	602	615	620	623	627	628	663	665	670	671	
Primary Program Goal: To equip masters students with the quantitative and econometric skills necessary to rigorously evalu programs in the area of international and development economics.												
1. Understand the application of modern micro and macroeconomic theory to the key problems of economic development, trade and finance in the context of an increasingly globalized economy, where this includes an analysis of market failures, poverty traps, the structure of incentives, the use of game theory to model economic behavior, open economy models of trade, models of natural resource use, migration, foreign direct investment, financial markets, and exchange rate determination.	C	C	C	C	M	C	C	M	M	C	C	C
2. Design a master's thesis research project based on summer fieldwork, including formation of an original research question, planning of an effective methodology, development of field protocols / survey instruments, and data collection in a developing or transition country. Students should develop a command of the relevant research tools needed to address a given poverty or globalization problem and test specific hypotheses.	I	I	I	C	C	C	C	M	I	M	M	M
3. Develop the capability of conducting an original quantitative empirical analysis of an international or development economics problem. Specifically, students should be able to understand the necessary empirical methods needed to identify causal relationships, especially related to international and development issues; determine the appropriate estimation method for an empirical model; utilize statistical software to conduct such estimation; and meaningfully interpret the results.	M	M	I	C	C	C	C	M	I	M	M	M
4. Effectively communicate technical research both in writing and orally, including compilation of a professional literature review, clear presentation of theoretical and empirical models, econometric analysis, and the relevance of the study's principal findings and implications for international and/or economic development theory and policy.	I	I	I	M	C	C	C	M	I	M	M	M

II. METHODOLOGY

5. **Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).**

For example, "the department used questions that were inputted in the final examination pertaining directly to the <said PLO>. An independent group of faculty (not teaching the course) then evaluated the responses to the questions and gave the students a grade for responses to those questions."

Important Note – WSCUC advises us to use "direct methods" which relate to a direct evaluation of a student work product. "Indirect methods" like exit interviews or student surveys can be used only as additional l complements to a direct method.

For any program with fewer than 10 students: If you currently have fewer than 10 students in your program (rendering your statistical analysis biased due to too few data points), it is fine to describe a multi-year data collection strategy here. It would be important to remember that every 3 years, we would expect you to have enough data to conduct a meaningful analysis.

Important: ***Please attach, at the end of this report, a copy of the rubric used for assessment.***

At the end of every year, graduating students defend their Master theses. Students present their project, hypotheses and econometric results in a 20 minute presentation followed by faculty questioning. Our criteria for evaluating the students are based on the following nine questions that form the basis for whether a student is able to pass the oral defense, or receive a "pass with honors". Each student is given a grade by IDEC faculty members in each of these areas subsequent to the defense and response to questions by the student.

Does the M.S. IDEC student…
1) State clearly the purposes, research question(s), and hypotheses appropriate to the topic and area of study?
2) Show appropriate preparation and knowledge through the review of literature?
3) Clearly and thoroughly explain the data collection methodology utilized, and present descriptive statistics in a useful way?
4) Explain, use and competently implement econometric methods appropriate to the area of study and to the purpose and question(s)?
5) Illustrate appropriate means for evaluating and interpreting the results?
6) Discuss and arrive at appropriate and logical conclusions from the results?
7) Demonstrate fluent verbal communication?
8) Respond well to questions?
9) Have a clearly understandable and visually useful PowerPoint presentation?

Note how these criteria are related to the PLOs for the program:

1) State clearly the purposes, research question(s), and hypotheses appropriate to the topic and area of study? and

2) Show appropriate preparation and knowledge through the review of literature?

relate to PLO #1: Understand the application of modern micro and macroeconomic theory to the key problems of economic development, trade and finance…

3) Clearly and thoroughly explain the data collection methodology utilized, and present descriptive statistics in a useful way?

4) Explain, use and competently implement econometric methods appropriate to the area of study and to the purpose and question(s)? and

5) Illustrate appropriate means for evaluating and interpreting the results?

6) Discuss and arrive at appropriate and logical conclusions from the results?

relate to PLO#3: Conduct original quantitative empirical analysis of an international or development economics problem…

7) Demonstrate fluent verbal communication?

8) Respond well to questions?

9) Have a clearly understandable and visually useful PowerPoint presentation?

relate to PLO#4: Effectively communicate research findings both in writing and orally…

In this way, we use our Master thesis requirement—and the thesis defense—to provide the definitive assessment of our PLOs. Writing an acceptable Master thesis is impossible in our program without realizing the four PLOs. Of course throughout the program, students have midterms and final exams, a large number of problem sets and other projects, but the Master thesis and defense is where we conduct the final evaluation. (We also have an exit interview with the Administrative Program Director.)

III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

   This section is for you to highlight the results of the exercise. Pertinent information here would include:

   a. how well students mastered the outcome at the level they were intended to,

   b. any trends noticed over the past few assessment cycles, and

   c. the levels at which students mastered the outcome based on the rubric used.

   To address this, among many other options, one option is to use a table showing the distribution, for example:

Evaluation Criteria: Did this student's Masters Project defense:	Poor/ Unacceptable	Fair/ Acceptable	Good	Excellent	total
1) State clearly the purposes, research question(s), and hypotheses appropriate to the topic and area of study?	0.0%	7.9%	43.4 %	48.7%	100.0 %
2) Show appropriate preparation and knowledge through the review of literature?	0.0%	9.2%	34.2 %	56.6%	100.0 %
3) Clearly and thoroughly explain the data collection methodology utilized, and present descriptive statistics in a useful way?	0.0%	11.8%	34.2 %	53.9%	100.0 %
4) Explain, use, and competently implement econometric methods appropriate to the area of study and to the purpose and question(s)?	0.0%	21.1%	36.8 %	42.1%	100.0 %
5) Illustrate appropriate means for evaluating and interpreting the results?	0.0%	18.4%	39.5 %	42.1%	100.0 %
6) Discuss and arrive at appropriate and logical	1.3%	14.7%	45.3 %	38.7%	100.0 %

conclusions from the results?					
7) Demonstrate fluent verbal communication?	0.0%	7.9%	42.1 %	50.0%	100.0 %
8) Respond well to questions?	0.0%	12.3%	39.7 %	47.9%	100.0 %
9) Have a clearly understandable and visually useful powerpoint presentation?	1.4%	13.5%	35.1 %	50.0%	100.0 %
Average	0.3%	13.0%	38.9%	47.8%	100.0 %
***Number of Total Students:	12				

Assessment of Results: Last year we had a cohort smaller than usual, yet, the graduating class received rankings on their Master theses even higher than the previous cohort, which we though as really good. We think that this was due, at least in part, to the fact that we had fewer student per advisor, so each student received a tremendous amount on one-on-one direct teaching. With, on average, nearly half the class scoring "Excellent" and nearly 40% scoring "Good" on those 9 evaluation criteria, we think this cohort had an overall first-rate performance. Again, we expect that from a third to a half of these theses will get published in high-quality peer-review journals. This is the ultimate assessment of the quality of work we teach and expect from our students. This is also almost unheard of in our discipline, where only PhD students are given this opportunity. Furthermore, many of our students found top research jobs even before graduation, a sign that the our IDEC brand is going strong.

THESES produced:

Ian Shors Connors Mexico

Financial Red Flags: Empirical Mapping of Firm Political Preferences by Sector in Mexico

John Sutton United States

Temperatures and Tempers: Heat's Negative Impact on Language and Mood

Isabel Miranda Global

The Long-run Effects of Tropical Cyclones on Infant Mortality

Susann Skjoldhorne India

The Effect of Disability Status on Parental Input: A Study from India

Mustafa Hisham Zahid India

The Impact of Cleft Lip/Palate and CLP Surgical Intervention On the Social Integration of Adolescents in India

Theresa Solenski Colombia

Empowering Female Entrepreneurs Through Mentorship in Medellin, Colombia

Candy Moreno-Garcia Colombia

Mentoring Female Entrepreneurs: A Revenue Analysis

Madison Levine Sierra Leone

The Behavioral Determinants of Well-Being in Sierra Leone

Ashwini Shridhar Sierra Leone

Are Menstrual Cycles a Biological Determinant of Well-Being amongst Sierra Leonean Schoolchildren?

Bethany Gerdemann Sierra Leone

Competition and Cooperation in Polygynous and Monogamous Households: Experimental Evidence from Sierra Leone

Yurlady Chaverra Palacios Colombia

Measuring Cocoa Agricultural Productivity: A Spatio-Temporal Econometric Approach

Mahsa Ashabi Native American Reservations

Captive Nations: Measuring Economic Growth on Native American Reservations in California

Hannah Cummons United States

Class III Gaming and Economic Growth on Tribal Lands: A Nighttime Lights Analysis

Shikhar Mehra Uganda

Economic Shocks and Personality Traits of the Ultra-Poor

Sarah Elmes Global

Better Fishing Conditions Improve Child Nutrition: Global Evidence from Satellite Data

IV. CLOSING THE LOOP

7. **Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.**

We are planning to completely restructure the IDEC program as requested by Dean Camperi: we used to have the curriculum based on 3 units courses, but now we need to transition to 2-4 units courses. This will be very challenging as, throughout the years, we created a program that worked really well, in terms of content and workload, with 3 unit courses.

In addition, given the new policy of 12 students minimum per class, we will have to remove the electives from the curriculum and transition towards a cohort model (each student takes the same classes, with no options).

8. **What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2017-2018, submitted in October 2018)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?**

This is the beginning of my first year as Program Director. As I started in this position only two months ago, I am only now starting to get familiar with this process. From last year report, I see many excellent suggestions from Prof. Alexandra Amati on how to rephrase our PLOs. As explained in point 7 above, we are currently undergoing a deep restructuring of our program, so this year we will revisit all our PLOs and incorporate Prof. Amati's suggestions.

The other important feedback of Prof. Amati was with respect to our curricular map, as it appeared to her overpopulated. We did this by design: not in the sense that we intend to achieve the same outcomes in multiple classes, rather, by going deeper and deeper in each class. Classes of technical natures (Mathematics, Statistics, Econometrics, Macro, Micro, etc.) may seem to be covering some of the same material when, as described in the syllabus, they do so at a completely different level. For example, one could learn how to find the vertex of a parabola by drawing it in a principle class, by memorizing the formula for the coordinates of the vertex in an intermediate class, by taking the derivative and do the FDT in an advanced class.