Annual Departmental Assessment Report

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for the Economics Major

1. Proficiency in microeconomic analysis, which applies to EC 311

Section 2: Assessment Activities

Given the Covid circumstances, we only collected data from one class in Spring 2020: Professor Mike Kuhn’s EC 311. Professor Kuhn selected three central concepts, as indicated in table 1, and then identified on his final exam an “easy” and a “hard” question associated with each concept. The performance of the students on these questions comprised the collected data.

### Table 1: Spring 2017 Central Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Hard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC 311</td>
<td>Competition and Market Outcomes</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profit Maximization</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the somewhat unlikely outcome that for each concept exactly the same percentage of students met with success on the easier question, the results are, in my view, predictable. The middle column – profit maximization – can be routinized, so that even harder problems can be solved somewhat mechanically; therefore, it is not so surprising that nearly as many students answered hard problem correctly as did the easier problem. Conversely, the most nuanced topic here occupies the first column: market outcomes in particular can quite challenging to master as they often involve feedback that takes care to resolve. Therefore it is perhaps not surprising that many students struggled with the harder problem. This outcome is quite useful as it can (will) be used to remind instructors of the difficulties students have with topics like market outcomes.

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

The results of the assessment will be communicated to appropriate instructional employees, with suggestions for improving outcomes.

Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience

The challenge of remote instruction dominated faculty attention throughout the year. I, myself, taught five distinct preps remotely, and can attest to the tremendous effort needed to transform content and style from in-person to remote delivery. And I can say without any hesitation that I
was amazed by my colleague’s energies and efforts to give student the best possible experience; and I was so very impressed by the students, who managed to navigate and succeed in this difficult and entirely unexpected environment.

**Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

We will again collect data from some of our intermediate level theory courses in order to assess the intellectual development of our majors.