Mission / Purpose
Economics is the study of how best to allocate scarce resources. Economics is an academic discipline that is central to the offerings of all major universities. As at most universities, economics plays an essential role in the general education required of all undergraduates, extending well beyond our undergraduate majors to essential courses in the core curriculum required of all GSU students, especially those majoring in business. At the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, it is the fundamental mission of the Department of Economics to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in our discipline, to share that knowledge with our students, and to disseminate that knowledge with policymakers and leaders in the public, nonprofit, and business communities, here and abroad. The Department of Economics is committed to the broad goals of Georgia State University and the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. The University Strategic Plan 2000 states the "[t]he overarching goal of the Georgia State University is to become one of the nation's premiere research universities located in an urban setting". As stated in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies Strategic Plan 2002-2007, the School “intends to be the highest rated policy school in the South and one of the highest ranked in the nation by 2007”. The Department of Economics shares both of these goals. We intend to contribute to these goals by continuing our efforts to better serve the needs of our undergraduate majors, our graduate students, and GSU students more broadly, by engaging in such activities as improving our curricula, introducing innovative course features, and creating new degree programs. Finally, we will continue to expand our service and outreach activities, to the profession, to the local business, nonprofit, and public sectors, to the State of Georgia, and to foreign countries and international agencies.

Goals
G 1: goals
The goals of the Department of Economics’s undergraduate program include teaching students the "economic way of thinking", and helping them appreciate and understand the global economy in which we live today. We wish to send out students that are prepared for the competitive job market with skills that are valued by employers.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives
SLO 1: Economics Basic Theories (G: 1) (M: 1, 3)
To demonstrate knowledge of basic theories, concepts, and analytical methods of microeconomics and macroeconomics.

Standard Associations
1 Outcomes of educational programs, including student learning outcomes (3.3.1.1)
Strategic Plan Associations

1.5 Other efforts in support of Goal 1 (Undergraduate Education).

SLO 2: Apply to specific fields (G: 1) (M: 1)
To be able to apply theories, concepts, and analytical methods of microeconomics and macroeconomics to specific fields of economics.

Standard Associations

1 Outcomes of educational programs, including student learning outcomes (3.3.1.1)

Strategic Plan Associations

1.5 Other efforts in support of Goal 1 (Undergraduate Education).

SLO 3: Benefits and costs (G: 1) (M: 1)
To be able to identify the relevant benefits and costs to consider when comparing policy choices.

Standard Associations

1 Outcomes of educational programs, including student learning outcomes (3.3.1.1)

Strategic Plan Associations

1.5 Other efforts in support of Goal 1 (Undergraduate Education).

SLO 4: Communication (G: 1) (M: 2)
To be able to communicate, using appropriate writing and oral conventions, basic economic theories, concepts, analytical methods, and policy choices.

Standard Associations

1 Outcomes of educational programs, including student learning outcomes (3.3.1.1)

Strategic Plan Associations

1.5 Other efforts in support of Goal 1 (Undergraduate Education).

Measures, Targets, and Findings

M 1: Tracking Examination (O: 1, 2, 3)
To measure the success of Economics majors in the undergraduate program in learning core economic concepts, the Department of Economics developed two Tracking Exams (TEs), one for Principles of Microeconomics (MicroTE) and one for Principles of Macroeconomics (MacroTE). Each exam is comprised of 50 multiple choice questions that cover the core concepts taught in the two principles courses. The TEs were previously administered each fall and spring semester in a selection of 3000/4000 level courses. At the end of the 50 questions, the student is asked whether or not they are majoring in Economics, and the student is presented with a list of all undergraduate economics courses and is asked to indicate which courses they have taken. Students are not allowed to take a copy of the exam with them, and are not given the answers to the exam at any point. The two TEs were developed and first administered in Fall 2004. Starting in Fall 2006, the TEs were administered in the newly developed ECON 4999: Senior Capstone Course in Economic Policy. The TEs count for 5% of the final course grade in ECON 4999 (addressing a concern a couple of years ago about students taking the TEs seriously). ECON 4999 is required for all new undergraduate economics majors, effective Fall
2006, it was required for all undergraduate economics majors except the BA in International Economics and Modern Languages; effective Fall 2009, it is required for all BA IEML majors too). The exam is administered twice - once during the first week of classes and again at the end of the semester - and the higher of the two scores is the one that counts toward the course grade. Several questions were selected this fall and spring to measure learning outcomes 1 and 2. See the attached documents in the findings section for the questions that were used for each learning outcome.

Source of Evidence: Capstone course assignments measuring mastery

**Target for O1: Economics Basic Theories**

We would like to see the average on the questions selected to assess each of the learning outcomes be at least 65%. While this may seem like a low target to an outsider, we believe it is appropriate because these questions are not necessarily emphasized in the ECON 4999 course. These are really questions that assess skills learned in the introductory (ECON 2105 and 2106) courses, and it may be quite some time since the students took those courses by the time they take the ECON 4999 course. We hesitate to ask questions beyond the introductory level because of the way our program is set up - students have a good bit of flexibility in selecting their upper level economics courses, and therefore, students in the ECON 4999 course will likely have taken different 4000 level courses. The only courses we can be sure they've all had are the introductory and intermediate courses.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Partially Met**

Note to review committee: See the file in the link provided for the actual questions and results. While the percentage correct of a few questions is below the target and some are above the target, the average across all questions is just below the target for SLO1.

**Target for O2: Apply to specific fields**

We would like to see the average on the questions selected to assess each of the learning outcomes be at least 65%. While this may seem like a low target to an outsider, we believe it is appropriate because these questions are not necessarily emphasized in the ECON 4999 course. These are really questions that assess skills learned in the introductory (ECON 2105 and 2106) courses, and it may be quite some time since the students took those courses by the time they take the ECON 4999 course. We hesitate to ask questions beyond the introductory level because of the way our program is set up - students have a good bit of flexibility in selecting their upper level economics courses, and therefore, students in the ECON 4999 course will likely have taken different 4000 level courses. The only courses we can be sure they've all had are the introductory and intermediate courses.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Partially Met**

Note to review committee: See the file in the link provided for the actual questions and results. While the percentage correct of a few questions is below the target and some are above the target, the average across all questions is just below the target for SLO2.

**Target for O3: Benefits and costs**

We would like to see the average on the questions selected to assess each of the learning outcomes be at least 65%. While this may seem like a low target to an outsider, we believe it is appropriate because these questions are not necessarily emphasized in the ECON 4999 course. These are really questions that assess skills learned in the introductory (ECON 2105 and 2106) courses, and it may be quite some time since the students took those courses by
the time they take the ECON 4999 course. We hesitate to ask questions beyond the introductory level because of the way our program is set up - students have a good bit of flexibility in selecting their upper level economics courses, and therefore, students in the ECON 4999 course will likely have taken different 4000 level courses. The only courses we can be sure they've all had are the introductory and intermediate courses.

Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Partially Met
Note to review committee: See the file in the link provided for the actual questions and results. While the percentage correct of a few questions is below the target and some are above the target, the average across all questions is below the target for SLO3.

M 2: Group Project in ECON 4999 (O: 4)
The group project will allow students to work together to analyze how the benefits and costs of a particular public policy are to be evaluated. The topic will be chosen by the group and should not be one covered in class. Groups consisting of no more than five students (and no fewer than two) will be assigned during the second week of the semester. Group presentations will take place during the last two weeks of classes, and should last about 15 minutes each. Groups must use PowerPoint for their presentations, which they will hand in at the time of the presentation. (A paper is not required for the group project.) Library research is required for the group project, and sources should be carefully noted within the presentation. The presentation should be about ten minutes long. The group can choose who speaks during the presentation. The group may have more than one of the group members speak during the presentation if the group feels it would enhance the presentation. Each individual must also hand in the evaluation sheet provided on the last page of the syllabus. The group project will count for 20% of the course grade. During this assessment cycle, the project was broken down by different skills and groups were assessed individually on these different skills. See the attached file for the rubric on the group presentation.

Source of Evidence: Capstone course assignments measuring mastery

Target for O4: Communication
We would like to see groups earn an average score of 7 or more out of 10 on the communication measure of the group project.

Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Not Reported This Cycle
We are in the process of redesigning the Capstone course; this project may not continue in the future. We did not assess it this cycle.

M 3: Individual Book Review in ECON 4999 (O: 1)
The individual book review will require the student to explore topics in economics that he or she is interested in and choose a book to read and thoroughly review. The review should be done in 5-6 pages (using one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 font). The instructor must approve of the book first, two weeks before the first test is scheduled. In addition, an outline for the book review will be due one week before the first test. The individual book review will count for 15% of the course grade. See the attached rubric for the book review.

Source of Evidence: Capstone course assignments measuring mastery

Target for O1: Economics Basic Theories
The book review was broken down into different skills and students were assessed separately on each one. See the attached rubric (in the measures section) for more details. We hope to
see the majority of students earn a rating of 2 or more, and many of them should earn an even higher rating on the "economics concepts" measure.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Met**

Note to review committee: See the table in the link provided. The book report is also a CTW assignment (in the ECON 4999 CTW course), so the table includes results from both a first and second draft as well as the final paper. A majority of students earned a rating of 3 or higher on the first draft, and a score of 3 or higher on the second draft and final paper. In fact, 90% earned a rating of 3 or higher on the final paper. We are pleased to see that our target is met.

**Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)**

**determine best way to assess learning outcome #3**

We have made adjustments to our assessment of learning outcomes based on feedback from the review committee of our previous assessment reports. Instead of reporting the average score for the micro and macro tracking exams as in the past, this cycle, we selected particular questions to assess the first 2 learning outcomes in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. We changed the tracking exam questions for the first 2 learning outcomes in the 2012-2013 cycle. We selected some questions from the tracking exams to assess learning outcome #3 in the 2012-2013 cycle (we did not assess learning outcome #3 in previous cycles). We are still thinking about the best way to assess that learning outcome. We also did not use the tracking exam to assess learning outcome #4; we used the group project in ECON 4999 for that instead.

- **Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010
- **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
- **Priority:** High
- **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
  - **Measure:** Tracking Examination | **Outcome/Objective:** Benefits and costs
- **Projected Completion Date:** 05/2014
- **Responsible Person/Group:** undergraduate programs committee in consultation with ECON 4999 instructors

**change questions for the tracking exam**

Upon inspection of the findings from last year, the Department of Economics' Undergraduate Program Committee decided to change the tracking exam questions to better reflect the learning outcomes we are seeking to measure. We are still considering changes to the assessment questions.

- **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
- **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
- **Priority:** Medium
- **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
  - **Measure:** Tracking Examination | **Outcome/Objective:** Apply to specific fields | Benefits and costs | Economics Basic Theories
- **Implementation Description:** We made changes to the questions since last year, but we are still re-visiting them and considering more changes.
- **Projected Completion Date:** 05/2014
Responsible Person/Group: economics undergraduate programs committee in consultation with ECON 4999 instructors