INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND AREAS
PROGRAM REVIEW/PLANNING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Complete all sections as instructed. Click the shaded sections to type your answer.
When completed, please save your file and e-mail it as an attachment to tanya_hanton@westvalley.edu.

A. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Program Name: **Economics**

2. Person(s) completing the questionnaire: Janis Y.F. Kea, Samuel Liu

3. Date of completion: Nov. 5, 2007

4. What are the primary purposes of the program? Check all that apply.

- ☐ WVC Degrees and Certificates
- **X** Transfer Courses
- **X** WVC General Education
- **X** Lifelong Learning/Life Enrichment
- ☐ Occupational / Vocational Courses
- ☐ Student Support Services
- ☐ Academic Support Services
- ☐ Administrative Functions

5. In one paragraph, how does the program further the College's mission and goals? (only new information need be added)

The program fulfills several of the missions of West Valley College including:

(1) transfer preparation: The two main courses (Econ 1A and 1B) are fully transferable to UC/CSU and other colleges/universities and fulfills a mandated lower division requirement for CSU, UC and/or AA degree. The Economics program also prepares students for college level courses in terms of critical thinking, organization and communication;

(2) vocational technical education: Although economics courses are not typically viewed as vocational education, the program helps students develop their skills and knowledge, or what could be termed as "the economic way of thinking," that is utilized in many areas of business and other professional fields. In fact, a recent Wall Street Journal (July 5, 2005) article noted that "People are fascinated with applying the economic mode of reasoning to a wide variety of issues, and these forces are causing them to study economics more and more";

(3) general education: The Economics program also promotes usage of and a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and quantitative analysis by applying them to real world issues and also promotes awareness of social and global issues that affect the students. In addition, in learning macro and micro economics principles, students learn about the working of the U.S. economy of which they are a part of, as well as the global relationships between the U.S. (and its citizens) and the rest of the world.

B. DATA ELEMENT ANALYSIS SECTION (ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE)

1. Using the enrollment data from Table 1 from previous program review, add or revise as appropriate.

a) What significant trends are revealed in the data?
b) What factors might contribute to any program differences compared to the College data?
c) What conclusions do you draw from this analysis that could form the basis for an action, objective or request for resources?

The data indicate that, in general, the Economics department has maintained a relatively high level of performance.

Declines in headcount were largely consistent with the overall trend for WVC. Only in Spring 2006 was there a significant drop in headcount in Economics; this may be partly attributable to the loss of a full-time faculty member in that semester and greater use of adjunct faculty. While the adjunct faculty were qualified to teach the sections, students' lack of knowledge about the instructors as well as the lower experience levels of the adjunct faculty may explain the decline in this semester.

Although more recent data are not yet available, preliminary estimates are that enrollment in Economics courses in the Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters have improved over previous semesters. This would be in contrast to the decline in enrollment for the college as a whole in those two semesters.

From available data, the Economics department has consistently had higher WSCH/FTE ratios than the average for WVC. Moreover, while the WVC ratios have dropped by 2.3 points between Fall 02 and Fall 05, the Economics department has maintained its ratio at about (or above) 22 over the same period.

The data suggest that the demand for Economics courses has been and continues to be strong, and that additional resources to the Economics department will help to raise enrollment for WVC. Recent studies document the rising demand for Economics degrees at the national level, and it would appear that the data for WVC Economics echoes this trend. Thus, additional FTEs to the Economics department to provide for more sections of basic principles courses, and to develop and offer additional economics courses appears to be warranted.

2. Using the demographic data from Table II from previous program review, add or revise as appropriate.

a) What significant trends are revealed in the data?
b) What factors might contribute to any program differences compared to the College data? See attachment for college-wide statistics.
c) What conclusions do you draw from this analysis that could form the basis for an action, objective or request for resources?

The latest demographic data (from the previous year) clearly show that Economics is more popular among males (about 60%) as compared to females (40%); this is in marked contrast to the male-female ratio of the WVC student body as a whole where females make up about 60% and males about 40%. The male-female ratio for the Economics department is consistent with Economics departments in other colleges/universities, where males represent a higher proportion of students.

Interestingly, the age-distribution for Economics courses differs from that of the WVC student body with the majority of students in Economics being in the younger age groups (<21 and 21-25). While these age groups represent about 60% of the student body, in Economics, these age groups make up nearly 80% of our classes. This high ratio of younger students is partly explained by the fact that the Economics classes are all UC/CSU transferable and is thus attractive to students who plan to transfer to 4-year colleges.

In terms of ethnic background, the distribution of students in Economics matched the distribution of students for WVC as a whole.

To reach a wider audience, the Economics department has been engaged in a variety of activities. Since the last program review (in Fall 2006), the department has revamped the Economics department website and developed a flyer for distribution at various campus events. As part of its outreach, the Economics faculty has been involved in various campus activities including Student Services Day and Transfer Day, as well as in advising and supporting student clubs (Business Club, Mountain Bike Club, Ultimate Frisbee Club, AGS). The Business Club is considering becoming affiliated with Future Business Leaders of America, a national student business organization. Additional resources that contribute to these efforts is needed; for example, funds for development of a display poster that educates students about the field of economics and its relevance to their lives, as well as for updating and printing of the economics flyer.

3. Using the success data from table III from previous program, add or revise as appropriate.

a) What significant trends are revealed in the data?
b) What factors might contribute to any program differences compared to the College data?
c) What conclusions do you draw from this analysis that could form the basis for an action, objective or request for resources?

Due to lack of recent data, the analysis below used data from the previous year.

The average success rate (defined as the percentage of students who received a grade of C or better, or Credit, for the course) over the period under scrutiny is slightly lower for the Economics department (58.5%) as compared to WVC as a whole (65.6%). This is partly attributable to the nature of Economics courses (for example, the level of math content used in lectures/claswork) and the amount of content that is covered in the courses (as required in order to meet transferability requirements).

Another and perhaps more disturbing trend is the decline in the success rate over time. From 63.6% in Spring 02, the average success rate srtood at 55.2% in Fall 05. Although the success rate for WVC as a whole has also dropped over the period, the drop is much larger for the Economics department. Assessment of this trend has been done to some extent using criteria developed through the SLO project (only for certain microeconomics courses), but further assessment that examines more fully the potential causes for the change would be helpful. Unfortunately, such an exercise requires more time and funds that the Economics department currently does not have available.

In terms of retention, the rates of retention for Economics is lower than for WVC as a whole. Again this is partly explained by the nature and content of the courses in the program.

In terms of improving both the success and retention rates, in addition to periodic assessment in the microeconomics courses, the Economics department has been and continues to work closely with the Tutorial Center to provide students with additional resources for understanding the economic concepts and ideas. In the past several semesters, the Tutorial Center and the Economics department have been successful in getting students to serve as tutors as well as in raising the number of students who visit the Center.

4. Are there any data or factors (e.g. integration of technology; college, district, or state expectation or mandates) concerning staffing in the program, that suggest a need for increasing or decreasing program staff (e.g. permanent and associate FTE, permanent and hourly classified staffing or administrative staffing)?

Additional resources, including FTE for both faculty and classified staff, could help to improve the Economics department in several ways. For example, with additional faculty, more sections could be offered to meet the rising demand of existing courses, and new courses that reflect both the interests of the students and faculty could be developed and offered. Additional classified staff is sorely needed, not only for Economics but for the division as a whole, to provide basic office services that currently are being done by the faculty (which, in turn, takes away valuable time and energy from other activities that faculty could engage in to enhance the teaching and learning). For example, copying/sorting/collating of materials, documents and forms, and organizing of class materials currently take up a significant amount of faculty time; time that could be spent more efficiently toward raising student learning (i.e., success and retention rates of students).

C. CURRICULUM SECTION (ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE)

1. Based on your program's curriculum information, as published in the most recent West Valley College catalog, what curriculum changes are anticipated in the next three years? (These changes could include major course revisions, curriculum deletions, new courses, revised or new options within a program, or proposed new programs.)

In addition to updating of course descriptions, the Economics department is currently working on developing new courses to offer students additional opportunities to learn and apply economic ideas and concepts. In the past few years, students have asked about additional economics classes that they could take at WVC; each has been disappointed to learn that we do not offer more.

In Fall 2007, a new course on financial theory is currently going through the curriculum review process, and, following articulation with UC/USC, we anticipate offering it to students in Summer 2008. Courses in globalization and international issues are also being considered.

As part of our program review process, we also will be removing Econ 003, Political Economy, from the college catalog. This course has not been offered for at least the past 6 years.

2. The attached excel document shows classes that have not been offered since Spring 04. Please list the courses you intend to submit to the Curriculum Committee by February 8th for de-activation prior to publication of the 08/09 catalog.

Econ 003, Introduction to Political Economy. Current faculty do not have the training/expertise to teach this class, and it has not been taught for at least the past 7 years.

3. Considering the new course and program level Student Learning Outcomes that have been developed since the last program review:

   a) What relevant findings have been derived through the SLO assessment process since the last program review?
   b) What changes have been implemented, or are planned, based on the findings since the last program review?
   c) What conclusions do you draw from this analysis that could form the basis for an action, objective or request for resources?

NOTE: Please contact LeAnn McGinley (741-2402), Assessment Coordinator with any questions concerning SLOs.

Currently, SLO assessment has been done on selected courses (Microeconomics). The assessment involves a pre-test of basic microeconomic principles at the beginning of the semester, and a post-test of the same concepts at the end of the semester. Consistently higher scores for the post-test suggest that student learning is being achieved. However, further analyses of the data are needed to gain insights into identifiable trends, if any. Unfortunately, funds for statistical analyses are not available and the demands on time of current faculty do not allow for this kind of in-depth investigation.

In the future, the Economics department can improve on its efforts in SLO assessment by expanding the assessment exercise to other courses (macroeconomics, for example) as well as other faculty, permanent and adjunct (currently, SLO assessment is only done in selected sections of Kea's classes).

Financial and manpower resources are needed to develop better assessment tools that measure SLOs in economics. These tools will have to take into account the mathematical and analytical nature of the content of the courses, as well as the limited time resources currently available to faculty (in terms of load). A new assessment tool specifically developed for testing of economic knowledge among college students is now available; unfortunately, funds for purchase of the standardized evaluations are not available in the Economics department.

D. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES SECTION (ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE)

1. If applicable, considering the effects of external influences on the program's purposes and goals:

   a) How do accreditation requirements, government regulations, advisory boards, labor market demand, transfer institution articulations or other external factors affect the program?
   b) How might these influences form the basis for an action, objective, or request for resources?

Because the courses currently offered are UC/CSU transferable (and accepted for credit by most 4-year universities), accreditation requirements and transfer institution articulations have an important and significant influence on the Economics program. It is imperative that WVC not only keep the Economics department informed, but should also seek active input and feedback from the Economics department of any proposals and/or proposed changes, as well as actual changes, in these areas.

To this extent, the college and district must work to improve the process by which the feedback and input of the Economics department is solicited and used in policy decisions and/or actions.

E. STUDENT FACTORS SECTION (ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE)

1. What program changes or initiatives has the program implemented in the last three years to meet the needs of its student population?

The Economics department has expanded its outreach to students by offering classes at the Campbell Campus, as well as offering both the macroeconomics and microeconomics classes via online instruction. This has allowed the department to reach out to a wider student base.

In addition, the department has been active in the startup of several student groups/clubs including the Mountain Biking Club, the Ultimate Frisbee Club, and the Business Club. The Economics faculty has been increasingly involved in various activities including Student Services Day and Transfer Day, and participation in outreach programs to high-school counselors and such.

F. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION SECTION:

1. General conclusions and summary statement.

The Economics program has been successful in meeting its basic goals of student enrollment and WSCH/FTE ratios. Differences in the demographic base of students in Economics courses as compared to WVC averages are either not significant or are typical of Economics departments in other colleges/universities. The success and retention rates of the Economics program are slightly lower than the WVC average. However, the difference is not substantial and based on anecdotal observations of Economics programs in other colleges/universities, the rates are not atypical. Nevertheless, improvements can be made, and with the assistance of the Administration combined with financial support for activities to improve success and retention of students, we are committed to working to this end.

2. Program Strengths:

The strength of the Economics program lies in its faculty, permanent and adjunct. The knowledge base of the faculty and their enthusiasm and commitment to teaching have been essential to the success of the program in attracting students and having students succeed in the courses. Continuous evaluation of faculty and the curriculum have ensured that the content of the courses being taught not only satisfy Title Five requirements (including for UC/CSU transferability), but also ensures that the content is relevant and thereby engages students in the learning of economics. Student feedback on evaluation forms as well as comments to the instructors suggest that the Economics program has succeeded in increasing student awareness and understanding of economic concepts and, more importantly, the world in which they live in.

In addition, each semester we have been able to raise interest among students in pursuing Economics as a major/field of study and in past years, students have gone on to 4-year institutions (including UC Davis, UC Berkeley, UCLA and San Jose State University) to pursue their study of economics.

3. Program Challenges:

While the success and retention rates of the Economics program are not significantly different from WVC, the decline in both rates over the past few semesters is a trend that needs further attention. The department is considering possible causes, and potential solutions, to the drop; further assessment and analyses could be facilitated with assistance and additional resources from the administration. Moreover, while the male-female ratio for Economics is not atypical, additional marketing of Economics to females would address this situation to the benefit of the program, the college and to the profession as well.

G. ACTIONS AND OBJECTIVES SECTION

Based on the foregoing analyses and findings in Sections A. through F., what are the program's intended actions or objectives for the next three years?

To meet the growing needs of students, the program has already begun to expand its course offerings and a proposal for a new course on financial theory has been submitted to the Curriculum Committee. Additional course proposals will be submitted over the next few years. If a sufficient number of courses are offered, the program will be able to provide the option for an AA degree in Economics or or an AA in Liberal Arts with emphasis in Economics.

As part of its outreach to students and the community, the program has also worked with the Administration in offering classes at the new Campbell Center and in offering a class in the 2007 Winter Intersession. Future plans are to continue classes through these two venues.

The program has also expanded its online presence. Online courses in both macroeconomics and microeconomics are now being offered each semester. Beginning in Spring 2008, the Economics program will also be offering online courses in the late-start schedule. As new courses are developed, these may be offered online as well.

The Economics program is also committed to raising our online presence by continually updating the department website so that it is a valuable resource for students. The success of this objective would be enhanced with the upgrading of laptops and purchase of teaching-related materials (for ex., laser pointers, videos of economics concepts, color printers) for instructors in the program.

The Economics program intends to maintain its existing courses and improve on enrollment/success/retention via continued monitoring and assessment through SLO and other tools. Funds for purchase of assessment and evaluation tools would enable the Economics program to meet the SLO goals of the college.

If funds are made available, the Economics program is committed to building and maintaining a library of economics books for students to check out and review. Currently, instructors are loaning out their personal copies of books (for example, Freakonomics) to interested students. Funds can also be used to purchase student "clickers". These devices have been shown to increase teaching effectiveness and solicit student input more easily.

Based on further evaluation of these efforts, the Economics program is committed to working with the Administration to further extend the WVC student base in the years ahead.

Timelines

Over the next three years, what are the program's timelines (in terms of predicted initiation and completion dates) for the stated actions or objectives?

Over the next three years, the Economics department plans to revise its curriculum by de-activating Econ 003, which has not been offered for almost a decade, and by adding new classes in finance theory (this class has already been submitted to the Curriculum Committee in 20070 and global issues. For the global issues class, it will likely be initiated through the Econ 100, Special Topics course as the full course outline is being developed. Anticipated initiation dates is Fall 2010 with full development of the course outline within two years thereafter.

Pending additional financing, the economics library project can be initiated immediately, with continuous update of materials being added to the collection.

Which of these actions or objectives would be initiated and completed within the coming year, given adequate resources?

The development of new courses and additional sections could be initiated and completed within a year, if additional resources (primarily FTE but also class space) permit.

The economics library project will be initiated as soon as funds are available.

Updating of the department website is a continuous process, but with additional funding, the website could be more fully developed as a marketing tool for the department and college.

H. RESOURCE REQUESTS 2006-2007

1. Please indicate if any of the resource requests identified in the previous program review were funded through one or more of the various WVMCCD resource allocation processes that were available in 06 – 07 (e.g. FTE allocation, classified staff, one time funding, budget augmentation, facilities, Land Corporation):

Please complete the following table (leave blank if the answer is not applicable):

	FUNDED by WVMCCD?
Full-time faculty FTE:	Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Associate faculty FTE: Additional FTE was funded in pursuit of WSCH for the college.	X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Classified Staff FTE: *Click once here and type your response*	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Classified Hourly (in dollars): *Click once here and type your response*	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Administrative Staff FTE: *Click once here and type your response*	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Facilities (brief narrative description): The whiteboards in the Economics classroom (SS51) were updated from the one-time funds.	X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Equipment (brief narrative description with estimated total cost): Two laptops were provided for the two full-time instructors through the one-time funds.	X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Supplies (brief narrative description with estimated total cost): No additional supplies were provided.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Staff Development (brief narrative description): No additions were made for staff development.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially
Other (please specify): None	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

2. What have you been able to accomplish as a result of the resource obtained?
(e.g. improved retention success and persistence, improved equity, new SLOs, higher enrollment, new online or satellite campus classes….)

NOTE: The Program Review Committee realizes that in some cases, accomplishments and changes resulting from resource acquisition are too recent to be measurable. The current Program Review process is only one year old. Future reviews of funding requests will focus on accomplishments and change occurring over a two-year period.

Due to the resources obtained, the Economics department has expanded its use of technologies in teaching concepts. This has enabled the faculty to reach out to a larger student market (through the development of two online course, one for macroeconomics and another for microeconomics), as well as raise teaching effectiveness to visual learners.

In addition, the new whiteboards in the Economics classroom have been very helpful in facilitating the teaching of the concepts. Students who have taken economics classes in previous semesters (when the old whiteboards were in place) have commented on the improvement in their ability to read the text/graphs from the new equipment (as compared to the old whiteboards). Their comments highlight the importance of having an environment that is conducive to learning.

Additional FTE allowed the Economics department to offer additional courses during non-prime time hours, including an evening class and a class at the Campbell Campus.

I. RESOURCE REQUESTS 2007-2008

1. What **new or additional** resources are required to accomplish the stated actions and objectives?

Please complete the following table (leave blank if the answer is zero or none):

Full-time faculty FTE *Click once here and type your response*

Associate faculty FTE: Additional FTE (up to 0.4) for Associate faculty would allow the Economics department to maintain its current course offerings each semester, and at the same time, offer new courses (including the recently approved course on finance theory and the proposed course on global issues) each semester as well.

Classified Staff FTE: *Click once here and type your response*

Classified Hourly (in dollars): *Click once here and type your response*

Administrative Staff FTE: *Click once here and type your response*

Facilities (brief narrative description): Serious consideration needs to be given to updating of the existing infrastructure. For example, replacement of student desks/chairs in the classrooms will be critical within the next few years, and although replacement of carpets seems trivial, students have commented about the musty odor of the rooms and have even asked about the presence of molds (!). As more Economics instructors utilize computer technologies, access to the Internet within the classroom is becoming more critical (as well as the need for computer-related materials such as laser pointers).

Equipment (brief narrative description with estimated total cost): Equipment that is complimentary to the laptops purchased (such as laser pointers and color printers, for example) for the instructors would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the department. In addition, student "clickers" would enhance teacher-student interaction. Estimated cost for this equipment would be approximately $3,000.

Supplies (brief narrative description with estimated total cost):
The current supplies budget is terribly inadequate and does not meet the basic needs of the program. To meet the needs of the department for current supplies, the supplies budget should be increased to $300. In addition to a general increase in basic supplies, specific requests for supplies include: (1) videos on economic concepts and issues to complement in-class and online courses (estimated cost of $1,200 for a full set), (2) an economics library that provides students with access to books on economic issues (for ex., Freakonomics and The World is Flat; estimated cost for initial startup of library is $1,000).

Staff Development (brief narrative description): Funding for the attendance of conferences on teaching economics at a cost of $1,000 per instructor for the purpose of improving teaching effectiveness and student learning. Many conferences/workshops that specifically focus on raising the effectiveness of teaching of economics are currently being offered; unfortunately, due to lack of funding, faculty are unable to participate in these meetings.

Other: To raise the enrollment in economics courses, the Economics program has been engaged in a marketing drive through its participation in various student organizations and events. To further raise the effectiveness of the marketing, flyers and tabletop posters that inform students of how economics relates to their lives and the courses offered by the program are needed. In past semesters, the Economics program participated in the on-campus student fair sponsored by EOPS and prepared and printed (at our own personal cost) one-page flyers that were distributed at the fair.

In addition to better assess learning in our courses, the department would benefit from the purchase of a new assessment tool that is specifically developed for testing of economic knowledge among college students (this is new and now available). Unfortunately, funds for purchase of the standardized evaluations are not available in the Economics department. Anticipated cost of assessment for one macroeconomics and one microeconomics class is approximately $600 per semester.

When completed, please save your file and e-mail (using the File: Send To menu) to tanya_hanton@westvalley.edu