

is the gender gap in the success rates. This too involves changes in our curriculum and teaching practices. We also need to improve our online teaching and adopt a more cautious approach in the expansion of online sections. Though we have conferred more degrees than ever before, our growth pales in comparison to the growth in Business Administration. Given that the course requirements for both of our disciplines overlap, there is an opportunity for growth in this area for our department. And finally, we need to revive Econ 204. We also need to develop new courses that generate more interest in our discipline. The latter two were our long-term goals in the previous review cycle that remain unfulfilled.

6. Our Direction, Vision and Goal

Our vision for the future is simple. Less than 5-10% percent of our students go on to pursue an undergraduate degree in economics. An overwhelming majority of our students go on to pursue a degree in business, accounting or other majors in social sciences. We want these students to have a sound, critical foundation of economics. As such, we want to build on our strengths to demystify economics and make economics an analytical tool for our students so they can make informed choices in their everyday lives and beyond. As a department, we have two unique assets - our heterodox theoretical approach and our innovative teaching strategies. We want to use these strengths to achieve two principal goals: a) grow our department and b) improve our student success rates.

A. How do we grow our department?

We do this through multiple paths.

1. **Expansion of course offerings:** Though Econ 204 (Money, Ethics and Economic Justice) was developed over two decades ago, it was never offered as a class. This was one of our goals in our last review cycle but for various reasons was not fulfilled. Given the events of last summer that exposed police brutality against African Americans, there is an

opportunity for us to review and revise the curriculum for this class to reflect the current realities. A class such as this could be appropriately revised so the curriculum resonates with the lived experience of many of our students. This will not only deepen student engagement but also promote an interest in economics as a discipline. Our goal is to offer this class in the next two years.

Beyond the medium-term, we want to develop a new course in environmental economics. This goal is a carryover from our last review cycle. Given the impact of rapid global economic growth on planetary species and resources, a class of this nature makes economics relevant to their lives. A few of the economics departments in the community college system offer such a course and we hope to develop this course in the next six years. For this to occur we also need another FT faculty member who is trained in these specific areas to complement our existing faculty strengths.

2. Promote People-Centered Economics: We need to go beyond economics for business to promoting economics as a social science. This involves the following:
 - a. Invite guest lectures, organize speaker series, and movies on topics related to race, mass incarceration, healthcare, drug addiction, climate change, etc.
 - b. Initiate a student led publication of an economic index that measures economic vitality of our surrounding cities (service area) by gathering key economic data such as local unemployment rates, hotel vacancy rates, retail sales of key businesses, home sales, etc. The Economics department of CSU Humboldt publishes one such index, [The Humboldt Economic Index](#). Such a collaboration between our students, surrounding business community and local governments serves a dual purpose: a) it makes economics relevant to our students' lives and makes them more engaged, and b) it can lead to more interest in economics and lead to growth in enrollment. This is our long-term goal contingent on funding.
 - c. Organize regional economics teaching collaborations and workshops with local high school and local community college teachers to share effective teaching practices. This can lead to

meaningful revisions to our curriculum and enhance our pedagogy that could potentially lead to more high school recruits to our department.

All three of these activities align with our college's mission in terms of building constructive bridges to our local communities, businesses and governments.

B. *How do we improve our student success rates?*

1. We can make revisions to our syllabi to include topics that are relevant and topical for our students. Our textbooks for our core classes have chapters that are of topical interest such as climate change, racial income and wealth inequality, access to healthcare, mass incarceration, etc. But some of us choose not to cover those chapters. Hence, the department as whole can meet towards the end of every academic year to collaboratively decide on the topics to include so there is a variety of topics that engage students that also match with the teacher's research interests. This is our short-term goal to be achieved in the coming academic year.
2. We need to expand our department specific tutorial services for more hours spread through the week – five days a week. These tutorials services should be led by teachers with the help of student tutors. All of our faculty should have the option of hosting at least a one-hour tutorial session a week that is open to all of our students in economics. These sessions help build a more personal relationship with the student outside of class that can lead to better engagement in the classroom. These sessions can be in-person when we return to campus or can be virtual via Zoom. What is imperative here no matter the modality (online synchronous, online asynchronous, or traditional) of the tutorial session is the need for iPads for student tutors as well as instructors. This is also our short-term goal to be achieved in a year.

3. We need to develop and adopt early intervention strategies for our students. Many of our students need tutoring to help their confidence in math related economics – computing ratios, making graphs, etc. The earlier we identify the low performing students and refer them to our tutoring services (possibly led by the faculty member), the better. Only then will the expansion of our tutoring services will bear fruit. Without this intervention, offering more tutoring services will be an exercise in futility. However, for the intervention to occur though all of us need training in equity-minded teaching practices on a department level. We have we can have this training within the next two years.
4. Offer a flexible schedule that meets the needs of our students and faculty. This entails offering multiple effective modalities of instruction (synchronous, asynchronous, individual, collaborative, hybrid) that support student success. This also ensures that a schedule entails traditional face to face instruction that is perhaps most effective for many of our students. Appropriate equipment is needed to support effective instruction in all of these modalities. We hope to make these changes for the coming academic year.
5. A necessary condition to improve student success is smaller class size. In this review cycle, our goal is to reduce all of our sections class size to 35. Our core classes have a cap at 40. The rest of our classes have a cap of 48. This is particularly detrimental to our lower division gateway classes such as Econ 101 and Econ 102. As discussed earlier, smaller classes allow for more personal attention from the instructor and has the potential to build confidence in a student’s math skills to lay a solid foundation for upper division economics courses.

All of these above activities ensure that we lay an equity-minded pathway for our students to reach their educational and career aspirations. Our hope is that these activities will eventually lead to the elimination of disproportional impact on our African American students by the end of this review cycle. These practices will also necessarily help all of our students’ success rates.