Graduate Program Review
Texas Tech University

Program Reviewed: Agricultural and Applied Economics

Onsite Review Dates: February 10 and 11, 2014

Name of Reviewers

Internal:
Please include name, title, and Department
Click here to enter text.

External:
Please include name, title, and Department
Octavio A. Ramirez, Professor and Head
Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia

I. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan
Please evaluate the following:

Vision, Mission and Goals

☐ Excellent
☐ Very Good
☐ Appropriate
☐ Needs Improvement

Strategic Plan

☐ Excellent
☐ Very Good
☐ Appropriate
☐ Needs Improvement

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Strategic Planning.

Other comments (optional)
Vision and plans need to be more realistic on what can be accomplished given the resource constraints of the department.

II. Program Curriculum
Please evaluate the following:

Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

Curriculum development coordination and delivery
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

Program learning outcomes assessment
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A
Program curriculum compared to peer programs

☐ Excellent
☐ Very Good
☐ Appropriate
☐ Needs Improvement
☐ N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Program Curriculum.

Other comments (optional)
MS Program is very good, PhD Program needs improvement. There is also a need for improved communication with the Economics Department, particularly in regard to the PhD program offerings.

III. Faculty Productivity

Please evaluate the following:

Qualifications

☐ Excellent
☐ Very Good
☐ Appropriate
☐ Needs Improvement
☐ N/A

Publications

☐ Excellent
☐ Very Good
Teaching Load
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

External Grants
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

Teaching Evaluations
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

Professional Service
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
Community Service

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Teaching load is quite high relative to other Ag Econ departments in the country, as it is the average amount in grants and contracts per faculty member.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Faculty Productivity.
Click here to enter text.

Other comments (optional)
Faculty qualifications are high relative to the overall ranking of the university and the teaching load they are expected to carry. High quantity of journal articles (very productive) but not very many in top outlets, which is quite okay for a mid-tier department.

IV. Students and Graduates
Please evaluate the following:

Time to degree

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement
- N/A

Retention
- Excellent
Very Good
○ Appropriate
○ Needs Improvement
○ N/A

Graduate rates
○ Excellent
○ Very Good
○ Appropriate
○ Needs Improvement
○ N/A

Enrollment
○ Excellent
○ Very Good
○ Appropriate
○ Needs Improvement
○ N/A

Demographics
○ Excellent
○ Very Good
○ Appropriate
○ Needs Improvement
○ N/A

Number of degrees conferred annually
○ Excellent
○ Very Good
○ Appropriate
Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.
Click here to enter text.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Students and Graduates.
Graduate enrollment and degrees conferred are average relative to other Ag Econ departments in the country but need improvement to meet TTU Graduate School expectations.

Other comments (optional)
Past enrollment is adequate but current enrollment is low relative to the goals of the university; however, it is average (on a per-faculty basis) for agricultural economics departments. Drop-in enrollment seems to be due to the elimination of an important source of state funding for assistantships and could be made up with increased grants and contracts.

V. Facilities and Resources

*Please evaluate the following:*

**Facilities**
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Appropriate
- [x] Needs Improvement
- [ ] N/A

**Facility Support Resources**
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Appropriate
- [x] Needs Improvement
- [ ] N/A

**Financial Resources**
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Appropriate
- [x] Needs Improvement
- [ ] N/A

**Staff Resources**
- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [x] Appropriate
Please elaborate if you have identified any items in this section as Excellent.

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section as Needs Improvement. Provide recommendations in the area of Facilities and Resources.

Facilities look grim and not well-maintained. Operations budget per faculty member and TAs available per credit hour generated are very low relative to other Ag Econ departments in the country.

Other comments (optional)
Hallways, other general areas, and some classrooms and student offices are in need of major renovation or at least refreshing. Operations budget provided by the university is minimal and despite its high enrollment and credit hour generation, the department is not allocated any TAs.

VI. Overall Ranking

Overall Ranking
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Appropriate
- Needs Improvement

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.
Keys: (Negative)

Strategic Plan is not up-to-date and vision statement and objectives are too ambitious given the resources available to the department. It it good to aim high, but not unrealistically so.

Faculty power structure seems to be top-down, with full professors dominating the conversation and junior faculty reluctant to provide input when in their presence. The future of the department is in the hands of the junior faculty, and they should have more of a say on where the unit is headed.

There seems to be resistance from some on ideas for change/improvement.

Graduate student numbers are low relative to stated TTU expectations.
Lack of communication/coordination with the Economics Department (not sure whose fault it is), which has resulted in a weak PhD curriculum, especially in the key field of microeconomic theory. Some stated areas of research emphasis are too narrow to attract a wide range of quality faculty and students.

Not a clearly defined focus for PhD program.

Little gender diversity and mentoring.

Keys: (Positive)

Have managed to put together a strong and productive faculty given the constraints they face (i.e. national standing and resources provided by TTU).

Applied but very productive department, particularly in terms of quantity.

Solid MS program curriculum, but student quality seems bimodal.

Passionate about their graduate program.

Numerous recent awards and honors for their students.

Several well-funded faculty chairs.

Have been able to recently attract several highly qualified young faculty members. Hopefully they can get them to stay.

Very high undergraduate student numbers relative to faculty size.

Very efficient in the use of available resources.

Please provide summative recommendations based on the overall review.

In addition to improving on the previously discussed negatives, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Attempt to improve the quality of outlets for journal articles – this will help secure competitive grants.

2. Increase MAB and PhD student numbers.
3. Consider the possibility of distance delivery of MAB courses (as a source of revenue), but additional resources will have to be made available.

4. Substantial refreshing of the facilities – possibly renovate the entire building.

5. Ask the Dean for temporary (seed) funding for assistantships to be reallocated from open faculty lines.

6. Explore why no TAs are assigned to a department with such a high undergraduate enrollment and credit hour generation.

7. Seek the restoring of recently lost operations funding. Currently available funding is far below what is needed to effectively run a department of this size.